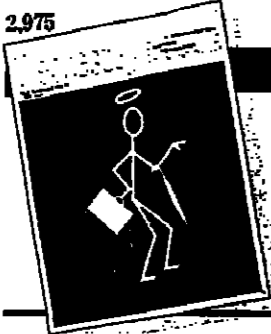




THE INDEPENDENT

WEDNESDAY 1 MAY 1996 40p (IR 45p)

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City slickers with a conscience

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Living



Fayed plans own political party

£23m earmarked to fight election

CHRIS BLACKHURST
Westminster Correspondent

Mohamed al-Fayed, the owner of Harrods, is drawing up secret plans to form a new political party and has earmarked £23m to field candidates at the next general election.

Under the working title, The Reform Party, Mr Fayed is planning to enter the next election on a constitutional reforming platform, calling for a Bill of Rights, Freedom of Information Act and an elected second chamber.

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Reform Party manifesto

- Bill of Rights
- Freedom of Information Act
- Abolition of the House of Lords
- An elected second chamber
- Slimmed-down monarchy
- Devolution for Scotland and Wales
- Re-nationalisation of the utilities

which he has campaigned, unsuccessfully for years.

It appears to be an expression of his deep anger with the British legal system, constitution and ingrained class prejudices, stoked by what he sees as his own mistreatment by the Government over his takeover of Harrods.

As a former colonial citizen, he has said that he was brought up to respect Britain and its sense of fair play and old-fashioned values.

But a source close to him said last night that since settling here permanently and buying Harrods Mr Fayed had discovered "a society in which the Government can roll over people and situations where they

can conceal and distort the truth."

His idea, it was explained, was "to fund a movement to bring about reform which will create a fairer system of government".

One of Mr Fayed's closest political influences is thought to be Lord Lester, the Liberal Democrat human rights lawyer. The Harrods owner's new forum was described as "humanist" in approach, by one source yesterday.

Rather than make a substantial donation to one of the three main political parties, Mr Fayed decided to plan his own. He has waged an increasingly bitter war with the Conservatives, decrying the Government's refusal to award him

citizenship and the way he was disowned by the party despite having been a significant donor in the past.

Labour did not appeal because of the fear that once in power, the new Blair regime would come under fierce pressure from resurgent trade unions.

Giving money to the Liberal Democrats was ruled out because the party was unlikely to have much clout after the next election.

By forming his own party, Mr Fayed is trying to build the platform he was seeking by acquiring or starting his own newspaper. Attempts to buy *Today* and the *Observer*, and to take over a news radio station were recently rebuffed - which has led him to think hard about funding his own party. The sum of money put aside is similar to the amount he is thought to have offered for the *Observer*.

In the last two years, Mr Fayed has become a high-profile thorn in the side of the Conservatives, exposing Neil Hamilton, the former trade minister, as having accepted and not declared to fellow MPs, free hospitality from him at the Ritz in Paris. Mr Fayed's accusations, made in a newspaper, forced Mr Hamilton's ministerial resignation.

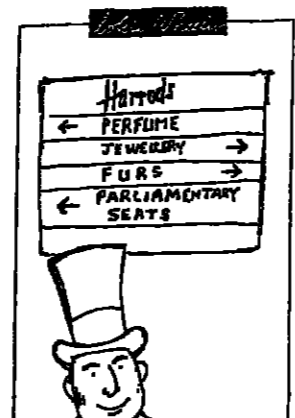
Another former minister, Jonathan Aitken, was also alleged by Mr Fayed to have had part of his Ritz bill paid by the hotel - something Mr Aitken has always denied.

A detailed dossier of allegations about ministers accepting hospitality and cash from Mr Fayed has been sent to Sir Gordon Downey, the new Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards.

Mr Fayed's office did not return calls last night. Guide to saving nation, page 2



Mohamed al-Fayed: 'A committed European'



Exclusive interview with sex-swap man who may force a change in law



Why I fought for the right to be female

ROS WYNNE-JONES

A man who was sacked after beginning treatment to become a woman was sexually discriminated against, the European Court of Justice ruled yesterday, opening the way for hundreds more potential cases against employers.

Legal representatives of the woman, who can only be named as "P" for legal reasons, said another 20 cases of alleged discrimination were already "in the pipeline" and more individuals were already coming forward following yesterday's decision in

The battle for my beliefs
page 17

Luxembourg. At least one case, concerning a woman known as "M", is to be brought against the Ministry of Defence.

"I am delighted not only for myself but for everyone who suffers from this condition," the woman, who was dismissed from a further education college, said yesterday.

"In all of my life and all of the treatment I have suffered, the way the head of the college behaved towards me was the most brutal and the most hurtful."

The woman was dismissed from a business consultancy position at the Cornwall college in 1992. She alleges that while employed as a man she had been offered a renewed contract with a rise in salary and other benefits, worth about £70,000.

TURN TO PAGE TWO

Heseltine calls for unity behind Major

DONALD MACINTYRE
Political Editor

Michael Heseltine last night sought to stamp on a fresh spate of Tory leadership speculation ahead of tomorrow's expected heavy losses in the local council elections with a ringing prediction that John Major would lead the party into the next general election.

In a resounding call for the party to unite behind the Prime Minister, Mr Heseltine launched a devastating assault on the party's Euro-sceptic right and sections of the national press for seeking to inflict on the Conservative Party "an ideological purity" which would sacrifice its natural and all important support in "middle England".

Mr Heseltine used all his authority as the party's most daz-

zling orator - as well as the most frequently canvassed potential pre-election successor to Mr Major - to praise his leader's "bold and brave campaigning skills". He declared that those skills, "honed in the heat of battle", would be at the disposal of the party in the next election.

Clearly warning that Mr Major's right-wing tormentors risked throwing away the general election, Mr Heseltine declared: "I find it incomprehensible that the more Euro-sceptic some people and newspapers become, the more they seem to risk the prospects of a craven Labour government, committed to the very policies they hate most."

Mr Heseltine's speech was delivered to a long, pre-planned meeting of the Tory Reform Group. It came in the midst of what even normally imper-



Michael Heseltine: Spirited call for party to stay loyal

turbable ministers acknowledged as an "unpredictable" period of "turbulence" ahead of the expected loss of 500 or more council seats tomorrow. Wishful hints from some MPs on the right - fiercely contest-

ed by several ministers - that Mr Major might yet go, passing the leadership to Mr Heseltine in a "bloodless" coup were strongly undermined by unmistakable signs that John Redwood, last year's challenger, would stand again.

Earlier, Downing Street launched a swift operation to underpin the message that the Prime Minister had no intention of quitting after Mr Major refused to co-operate in what he called opposition "fantasy".

During exchanges in the Commons, peppered with mock-friendly opposition questions about whether he had made a pact with Mr Heseltine to stand down, George Foulkes, the Labour MP, asked for a "categorical assurance" that however many seats your party lose on Thursday, you will lead your party into the gener-

al election". Mr Major surprised a number of senior Tory MPs by merely saying that he had "no intention of accommodating your silly question".

Downing Street moved quickly to emphasise that Mr Major would indeed lead the party into the next election. It also took the unusual step of dismissing as "absolute baloney" rumours that a pact was struck when Mr Heseltine was promoted after Mr Major's re-election as leader in the summer of 1995. That was later reinforced when it was said on Mr Heseltine's behalf that such reports were "pathetic".

The fact that Mr Heseltine mounted a more robust defence of the Prime Minister's position than did Mr Major himself in the Commons, will no doubt encourage some of his admirers - particularly on the left of the

party - that Mr Heseltine will still accede to the leadership.

In what could equally be interpreted as a warning to Mr Major not to bow further to the Euro-sceptics and the strongest possible reinforcement of the Prime Minister's rebuff to them on Monday, Mr Heseltine said every party leader faced the challenge of "identifying the point" at which "reinforcing the wishes, prejudice and self-interest of a party's committed supporters may (put off) ... the uncommitted but essential votes without which electoral success is impossible".

The Deputy Prime Minister concluded with an unequivocal endorsement of Mr Major's European policy. "He is now entitled to our united support, which is the essential ingredient in our determination to win again."

Declining sperm theory out for the count

DAVID USBORNE
New York

Claims that men are suffering from a mysterious decline in their sperm counts that could eventually imperil the future of the human race are being dramatically challenged by scientists in the United States.

Three new studies into male fertility suggest that sperm counts among American men, east, have actually increased in the last twenty years. There is also intriguing evidence that residents of New York City consistently demon-

strate far higher sperm counts than men in other US cities.

While the revelation hands welcome machismo rights to all Big Apple males, it is also the basis for another important conclusion: that previous studies suggesting falling sperm counts were gravely flawed because they failed to take such geographical variations into account.

A Danish scientist first alerted the world to the possibility of declining sperm counts in 1992, showing that sperm counts among 15,000 men in 20 countries had dropped by

almost half in 50 years. Two subsequent studies, in Belgium and France, drew similar conclusions, and raised concern over the quality of sperm.

The new findings, which are certain to provoke furious debate in the medical fraternity, are detailed in three reports in this month's issue of the US journal, *Fertility and Sterility*.

One study analysed the semen of 1,283 men who made deposits to sperm banks in three cities - Los Angeles, New York and Roseville, Minnesota - from 1970 to 1994. Its author, Dr Harry Fisch of the Colum-

bia-Presbyterian Medical Center in New York, found a "slight but significant increase".

There may be no explaining - scientifically anyway - the elevated sperm counts of New York men, who boast 131.4 million sperm per millilitre of semen. That is more than 50 per cent higher than the measly 72.7 million registered by men living in Los Angeles.

Much more important, says Dr Fisch, is to understand the main bodies of research that have suggested worldwide declines in sperm counts were misleading because they compared

new data gathered in Europe and the Third World with earlier results from New York, where the counts have always been high. "Take New York out of those studies, and there is no decline," he said yesterday.

Non-scientific speculation about sperm-heavy New Yorkers is already under way. Among the theories: LA guys spend too much time in hot tubs (not good for the testicles), tight shorts (likewise) and in fitness gyms. Or there is the supply-and-demand angle: New Yorkers have more sex than men anywhere else.

IN BRIEF

Willis' club searched
Police raided a club run by Bob Willis, the former England cricketer, as part of an investigation into alleged illegal ticket sales for this year's European soccer championships and the FA Cup Final. Page 3

Today's weather
Cloudy with rain in the North. Sunny spells and showers in the South. Section Two, page 25



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news

Agony and ecstasy of the emotionally challenged

This week politicians were labelled "emotionally illiterate" by psychotherapists. The most famous is Susie Orbach, author (I think) of *Fear of Fat and Flying is a Feminist Issue*, and who helped the Princess of Wales find herself by attending heart operations. MPs, however, as evidenced by their entrenched party stances and stage enmity, have real problems.

But suppose they didn't. Would Environment questions yesterday – despite proximity to local elections – centred on the theme "how can we work together to make the operation of local councils a more satis-



DAVID AARONOVITCH

fy experience for councillors and their constituents?" No such luck. From first to last, various parties savaged each other's records in local government. The funding of Westminster Council (one of the few

still in Conservative hands) was a "fix" and a "fiddle", said emotionally under-developed socialists; while Sir Paul Beresford – junior minister and former dentist (and therefore probably a sadist) – referred to "shenanigans" in Labour and Libdem bailiwicks.

Barry Field (Con, Isle of Wight), who is not so much emotionally illiterate as emotionally incontinent, made a high-decibel rant in which the only words I could catch were "that lot... wheugh... Libs... gragh... health warning".

But, to be fair, there was a moment of Orbachian harmo-

ny, when James Chappison, on the government front bench, spoke about "high-access woodlands", including the "twelve community forests". New Labourites subsided into reveries about oak, ash and thorn co-existing in drug-free, low-crime, responsible togetherness. MPs smiled at each other.

And what about a therapeutic Prime Minister's Question Time? "Is the Prime Minister truly happy?" "It has been a difficult week, but a visit to the operating theatre at Huntingdon General worked wonders".

Not a chance. John's government was presiding over a

huge rise in crime. Tony's party was soft on criminals. Peter Luff (Worcester) and Jacques Arnold (Gravesend) punctuated Blair's contribution with yells, whoops and childish gestures. Watching therapists in the public gallery clucked their tongues in sympathy over the repressed pain on view.

Better things might have been expected from Labour MP Angela Eagle's 10-minute rule bill on equal rights for part-time employees. Ms Eagle is a rising star but her modern image was belied by a traditional speech in which workers were "oppressed" and "exploited"

and her primary historical references were to slavery, the workhouse and mills.

Opposing her was that clever pinched-face ideologue, Alan Duncan. Where Ms Eagle had plucked our heartstrings with her descriptions of downtrodden folk working out of garrets and cellars, a tearful Mr Duncan sought relief for the "smallest and most vulnerable businesses in the country". Labour could never understand this, he said, because "the only thing that they have ever run in their life is a bath". What did the sponsors of the bill know about the world of work? At

which the florid ex-miner Ronnie Campbell, sitting next to Dennis Skinner on the bad-boys' bench, graphically indicated to Mr Duncan his horny hands, his sinewy limbs and the sweat of his brow.

Only when Ms Eagle stepped forward to present her bill did its healing, consensual qualities become apparent. To Mr Duncan's embarrassment its ignorant sponsors were of all parties including Roseanna Cunningham (SNP), Emma Nicholson (Libdem), Elyn Llywyd (Plaid) and Tory Hugh Dykes. A defeated Mr Duncan slipped off to book a session with Susie.

IN BRIEF

Armed robber loses legal aid

An armed robber suing police for shooting him has lost his legal aid. It was revealed yesterday. Steve Charalambous is demanding at least £250,000 for pain and distress after being shot in the back by three police officers in a hold-up three years ago. The Legal Aid Board suspended the grant in February after a public outcry, warning his solicitors that it would be withdrawn unless their explanation for its use was satisfactory. Charalambous, 35, was jailed for five years in 1993 for an armed raid on a Post Office security van delivering £250,000 in Crouch End, north London.

Vegetable stew

A poster of a giant courgette with the caption "A vegetarian diet can be orgasmic" has been banned from railway stations. Maiden AdRail, which operates train services on behalf of Railtrack, said the Vegetarian Society advertisement was likely to offend the travelling public. It has been replaced by a poster of a chilli pepper and the caption "Apparently, vegetarian food makes you red hot".

Actor cleared

The actor William Murray, 54, who plays DS Don Beech in *The Bill*, was cleared of punching a diner in a London restaurant. Bow Street magistrates discharged the case because the prosecution was not ready to commit him for trial. Mr Murray said he had punched company director John Mills, 37, in self defence at Langan's Brasserie last November.

£50,000 coins find

A man digging foundations for his new house in the Scottish Borders unearthed 1,472 silver coins worth at least £50,000. The hoard, dating from between 1280 and 1322, includes English, Scottish, Irish and some continental coins. The location at a village near Kelso has been kept secret because the finder wants to avoid his property being invaded by fortune hunters.

School buses crash

More than 100 children escaped serious injury when two school buses crashed in rush hour traffic. Twelve ambulances rushed to the scene on the Tenter Bridge over the A1 north-east of Leeds and a doctor driving past the accident stopped to help paramedics treat children on the spot.

Shellshocked

A hen in Wimborne, Dorset, has laid an 8oz egg, 5in high and 4in in circumference. Chicken farmer Madge Cox said: "My first thought when I saw it was: 'Oh my God - is she all right?'"

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Al-Fayed's ambitions: Money gives Harrods boss the chance to throw stones at the windows of Westminster

Resistible rise of the tycoon politicians

This was a trend which was supposed to pass Britain by. The United States, with its presidential elections, was always a place where the very rich could buy a shot at winning political power. Italy, with corrupted politics, was a country where tycoons could sweep away the old, at least for a while. In Asia too, we have seen businessmen-politicians, waving populist manifestos. But the British parliamentary and party system has always proved impervious to capture by rich outsiders.

It will probably remain so. But Sir James Goldsmith's Referendum Party, backed by £20m of his own money, has shown that a rich and determined outsider, armed with a popular idea, can make the political establishment quake. Now Mo-



ANDREW MARR

neering business career ended that generations of Tories regarded him very warily. Mr Fayed's battle with Lord over House of Fraser in the 1980s and his struggle with the Department of Trade and Industry, left him with a permanent sense of grievance about the British political elite, whom he felt had treated him unfairly. His subsequent failure to get a British passport, despite owning Harrods, the country's most famous shop, hasn't helped.

The tycoon-politicians also tend to be media-obsessed. The most famous example is Silvio Berlusconi, who came briefly to power in Italy in the mid-Nineties: he controls three television stations and the main TV advertising agency, though he is divesting himself of some assets later this year. Sir James founded *Now* magazine, which failed in the late Seventies, before building a French media empire. Ross Perot made his money in computers and is keen on using cyberspace to link his Reform Party supporters together.

Steve Forbes, who did well in the early stages of the US Republican primaries this winter, is heir to a \$1bn publishing empire, which includes *Forbes* magazine. And Mr Fayed has made repeated attempts to buy British newspapers; the Scott Trust which owns the *Observer*, recently refused a bid for that paper reputed to be similar to the £23m he is now thinking of using for his political party.

Tycoon-politicians also betray a fondness for simple, eye-catching solutions. Sir James's referendum was preceded by Mr Perot's anti-Washington crusade: Mr Forbes's flat tax and Mr Berlusconi's Italian patriotism. In Pakistan, Imran Khan (married to Sir James's daughter) has launched a Justice Movement, against, well, injustice. The al-Fayed platform seems a little more complex, but its emphasis on freedom of information and a Bill of Rights is in the populist mould.

Thus far, apart from Mr Berlusconi, none of these people have actually won power.



Stepping up: Mr Fayed, who nurses a grievance about the British political elite

A simple guide to saving the nation

ANDREW BROWN

Now that Mohamed Al-Fayed has become the latest business mogul to launch a political party that will rescue Britain, many readers are asking themselves "Could I be next?" The answer is almost certainly "yes". If you follow this simple step-by-step guide to saving the nation:

1) Make your first £100m. Do not make the money in this country. To do so might take the edge off your patriotism. It is acceptable for the saviour-tycoon to make a subsequent fortune in England, but he should enter British public life as a rich man, who sees the whole island as a sort of country cottage, where he can rest on his laurels.

2) Try to buy a newspaper. There is nothing like failing to buy two or three newspapers to make a man realise that this country is so rotten that it needs a new government.

3) Once you have reached this insight, the next stage comes naturally. Everywhere you look you see evidence of near criminal incompetence. Since no one will sell you a newspaper, you start writing letters to them. No one takes any notice. You realise the entire establishment is ganging up on you. Still no one takes any notice. Wearing of writing letters to the papers, you start to take out full-page advertisements. Still fewer people take notice.

4) Make another couple of hundred million. Realise that money may not be everything. Write a book to this effect, and command every outpost of your vast empire to hand out free copies of your work. By now you have almost certainly attracted a number of alarmingly clever young men who understand that you are the country's only hope. Everyone else believes you are suffering from megalomania. Only these young people have the perspicacity to see that your problem is altruism.

5) There are only two cures for altruism on this scale, and one of them has already been taken: to marry Miss Roberts, the grocer's daughter. The other is to own a national newspaper and to make money out of it. It worked for Lord Beaverbrook and Conrad Black. If only Mussolini had been able to make his papers pay.

From cash box to ballot box



Imran Khan: Launched a movement in Pakistan to campaign against injustice.



Sir James Goldsmith: Rich and determined outsider, armed with a popular idea.



Ross Perot: Made his money in computers and is keen on using cyberspace to link his Reform Party supporters together.

But they have won huge personal publicity of a kind few business figures can dream of. They have influenced political debate in their countries, forcing mainstream politicians to react. And at key moments tycoons have levered out the old establishment: in 1994, Mr Berlusconi helped break the corrupt Italian Christian Democrats. Three years earlier, at the other end of Europe, Bert Karlsson, a down-market theme park and record-label tycoon helped destroy the long rule of Swedish Social Democracy.

Britain shares some of the discontent exploited by tycoon-politicians elsewhere. Popular discontent with Westminster and Brussels echoes the hostility to Washington shown by middle America. Though British politics is not corrupt in the way that Italian politics has been, the sleaze stories of the mid-Nineties and the publication of the Scott report have helped undermine confidence in the unreformed political system.

We are not immune to seeing business people as popular heroes – Richard Branson and Bill Gates are obvious examples. And like other countries, Britain has shivered in the winds of global economic change which have stripped away some of the traditional security of middle-class voters, making political instability likelier.

The great difference, as Mr Fayed is likely to discover, is that the British parliamentary system based on first-past-the-post constituencies makes it far harder for a charismatic outsider to break down the gates of power.

Sir James is gaining his influence by frightening a divided and failing party of government into thinking his people will help escape Tory MPs in favour of Labour ones in marginal seats. In Britain, tycoons can only throw stones at the windows of the closed Westminster elite. In a world where publicity and power are often mistaken for one another, Sir James and Mr Fayed remain potential party saboteurs, not alternative leaders.

'It was like coming home when I knew I could have surgery'

FROM PAGE 1

Lawyers for the headteacher, who also cannot be named, said that it was a matter of redundancy and not of discrimination.

"P" said that the sacking had come at the worst possible time, because she was about to undergo a major life change. She also needed her income, because private surgery is expensive. For many years she had not been able to find the language, or a concept, to explain why she felt different from other people.

"I have a twin sister and I could never understand why we were treated any different. I didn't feel as if I was born in the wrong body or anything like that. I just knew something was wrong with me. When I got to about seven years old I realised that everything couldn't come right and I assumed I would die because that was the only possible future for me."

It was not until the late 1980s that she found a support group and realised the possibility of acceptance and surgery.

"It was like coming home," she said. "When I realised that

I could have surgery, it was like having an incurable illness that could be cured. No-one ever asks a blind person whether they actually want an operation – of course they have it."

The first stage for anyone who is intending to embark on a course of gender reassignment surgery is for them to live as someone of the gender that they wish to become.

It was at this stage that "P" decided that it was time to talk to her employers. "I told the headteacher about my circumstances and, initially, he was supportive, saying that he valued me for my aptitude and skills and that wouldn't change," she said.

Last night the college and headteacher refused to comment, other than to acknowledge that they were aware of the judgement. Cornwall County Council, which was also named in the industrial tribunal proceedings said: "All submissions in this case have been entered by the Government."

The Equal Opportunities Commission, which financed the case, said it was now likely that the Government would have to amend legislation.

pean Union directive on equal treatment, which guarantees men and women the same rights.

The Court heard that "article 5 precludes dismissal of a transsexual for reasons relating to gender reassignment" and that the principle of equal treatment for men and women meant there should be no discrimination whatsoever on grounds of sex.

The case was sent to Luxembourg by a industrial tribunal held in Cornwall, to establish whether transsexuals and attitudes towards changes of sex are covered by European law. The tribunal will now decide on damages.

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Irish tell Major to open talks

COLIN BROWN

Chief Political Correspondent

John Major has been urged by Dublin personally to open the all-party talks on the future of Northern Ireland in a last-ditch attempt to persuade the IRA to restore the ceasefire and allow Sinn Féin to sit down at the negotiating table.

It could mean Mr Major would have to meet Gerry Adams, the president of Sinn Féin, and Martin McGuinness, a Sinn Féin leader. Irish officials have told Downing Street the Prime Minister's attendance at the opening of the negotiations on 10 June would send the "right signal" to the IRA of the Government's commitment.

Mr Major has been told John Bruton, the Irish Prime Minister, will be there, if he agrees to represent the British Government at the negotiations.

Irish sources said: "He can't make his mind up." Mr Major fears if the talks dramatically broke down, he would be associated with the failure.

British ministers believe there is a serious risk that the talks could collapse on the first day over the issue of decommissioning IRA weapons.

Tory MPs rejected the idea, floated by Dick Spring, the Irish Foreign Minister, for the decommissioning issue to be hived off into separate talks.

Downing Street avoided saying anything officially about Mr Spring's proposal. Irish officials believe it will need talks between Mr Bruton and Mr Major in the coming days to avoid it becoming a crisis.

It was rejected out of hand by David Wills, a Tory MP, who warned that it would mean the Ulster Unionists could not attend the talks. His warning was reinforced by other leading Tory backbench MPs yesterday and the Ulster Unionists, led by David Trimble. Mr Trimble said: "I think it is very foolish of Mr Spring to raise this here at this issue."

"I don't see any merit in it at all. We have already dealt with this issue. The Mitchell Report deals with the issue. There is need for a further report."

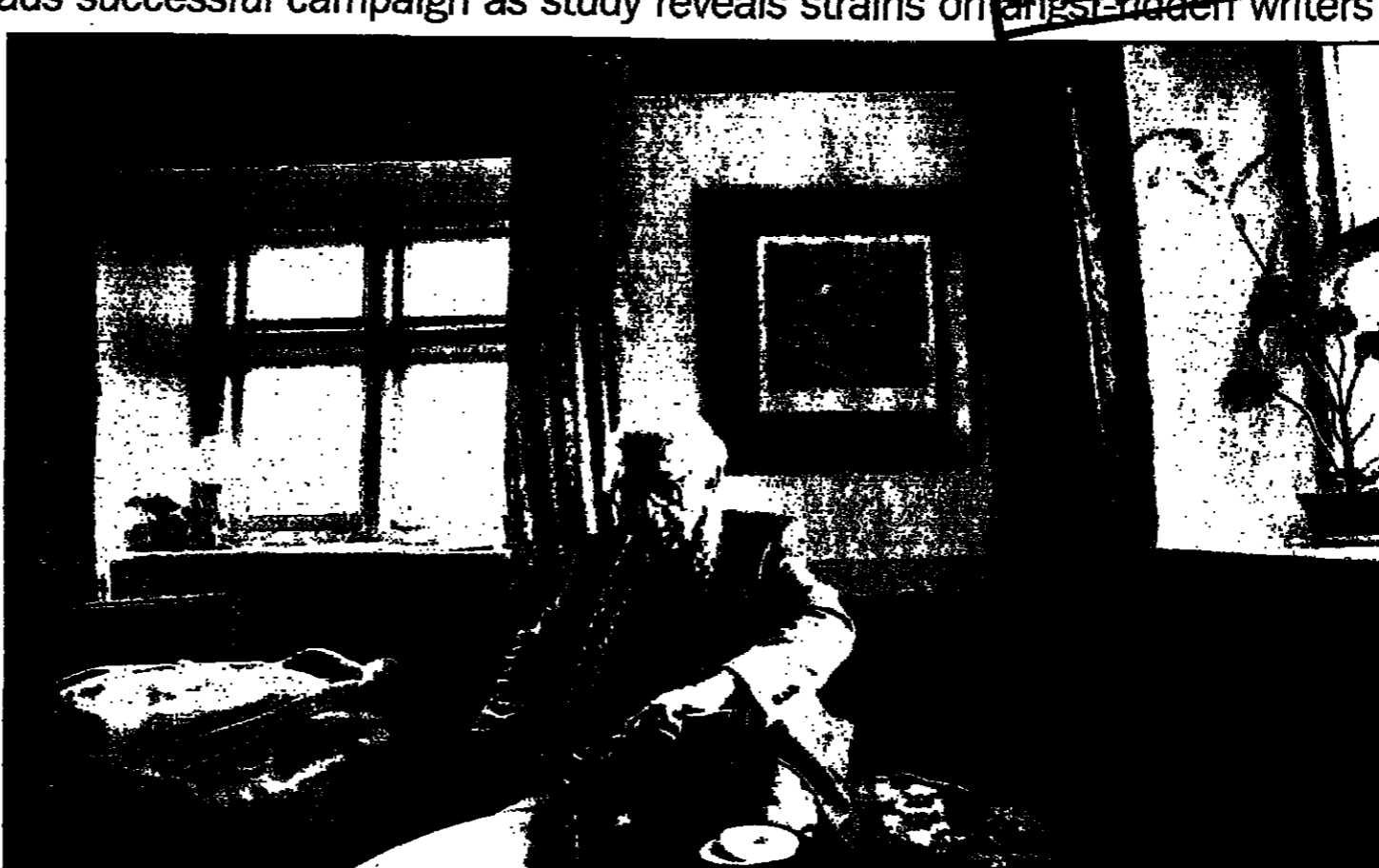
The Government will not accept the proposal to the Ulster Unionists and would not work. "What the Irish don't seem to understand is that we can't force the Ulster Unionists to the talks," said one ministerial source.

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Bookman's prize: Novelist spearheads successful campaign as study reveals strains on artists' hidden writers



Green and pleasant land: The Slad Valley in Gloucestershire where plans for a housing development have been shelved. Above: Laurie Lee celebrating in the Woolpack pub

Photograph: Rob Stratton

Cider celebration in Rosie's rustic valley

MICHAEL PRESTAGE

The Slad Valley, immortalised by Laurie Lee in his best-selling novel *Cider With Rosie*, is to be spared a 90-house development after a successful year-long campaign by locals.

A driving force behind the Slad Valley Action Group was the author himself who joined in the celebrations after Four Oaks, the development company, announced it had withdrawn an appeal to build the houses.

Stroud District Council had already refused planning per-

mission because the proposed development would significantly harm the quality and character of the landscape. Four Oaks lodged an appeal and a public inquiry was due to be held later this month.

Mr Lee, who lives in the valley, said: "Of course I have a feeling of elation and relief that this threat has been removed from us."

"People feared what this development would mean. People who live here or visit are enchanted that such a valley still exists."

"Apart from the stone walls,

I am the oldest thing in the valley. I used to think like them I was indestructible, but two of the walls fell down recently and I suppose I shall be the next to fall. At least I can go knowing this important fight has been won."

The action group raised £4,000 to fight the appeal, which will now be put in a trust fund to save the greenfield site if another application is made.

There are still fears that another application will be submitted, but for the moment the mood is one of celebration.

However, the fears may not

be unfounded. A spokeswoman for Four Oaks said: "The decision to withdraw was taken on planning issues and not because of the public outcry. Concerns of the literary links with *Cider With Rosie* clouded the issue. The village of Slad is two kilometres away from our development but a lot of emotion has been stirred up."

The developers will wait for Gloucestershire County Council and the district council to produce their local plans, which form a blueprint for land use into the next century, before deciding what to do next. "At this

stage we are ruling nothing in and ruling nothing out."

Mr Lee, sitting in the Cider With Rosie bar of the Woolpack in Slad, a hostelry featured in the novel, was still celebrating yesterday, however.

He said: "We have been drinking scrumpy since we heard the news and I expect this will continue for a little while longer."

The author added: "It has been a tough battle and given the forces ranged against us we didn't expect an easy victory. Four Oaks is a name I always mix up with a local pub, but they

weren't distributing my favourite beer. They had plans to stud the end of the valley with new houses and roads."

Mr Lee supported art exhibitions, concerts and poetry readings to raise money for the campaign. He also spoke against the development at a packed public meeting attended by Four Oaks representatives last year.

While campaigners acknowledge that people need to have homes, those living in the valley – plus supporters from as far afield as Australia, New Zealand and the United States

who are fans of the novel – feared the housing would be the thin end of the wedge and precipitate further development.

Mr Lee came to the valley when he was three years old and stayed until he was 19.

"I used to think the whole world was like this," he said. "When I went out into the world to try my fortune I realised there was only one place like this."

"There are some things that are unique and are unspoiled and shouldn't be ravaged, even if it deprives a few shareholders of a little extra money."

Health, love and happiness are preserve of poets

LIZ HUNT
Health Editor

Young writers take heed. If you want good health, a satisfactory sex life, and longevity, then express yourself in verse, rather than playwriting or prose.

A new study suggests that poets are not the angst-ridden victims of their verbal creativity that is popularly supposed. In fact, compared to playwrights and novelists they are models of mental and social stability.

An analysis of 100 well-known British and American writers – including Hemingway, Waugh, Conrad, and Scott Fitzgerald – found that poets suffered less severe depressions, alcoholism, personality deviations, and marital and sexual problems.

There was one drawback for poets highlighted by the study: they suffered higher levels of severe manic depression requiring hospital treatment than playwrights and novelists. Mood swings between elation and depression were found in 25 per cent of them, against only 7 per cent of other writers.

They also appeared to live longer; 43 per cent were over the age of 74 when they died, compared with 38 per cent of playwrights and just 24 per cent of novelists and poets.

And while they were living, poets also enjoyed happier marriages than their fellow scribes. More than 70 per cent of the playwrights had problematic or broken marriages, compared with just 26 per cent for poets.



Lives analysed: Ernest Hemingway and Evelyn Waugh

writers enjoyed satisfactory marriages, according to the study published today in the *British Journal of Psychiatry*. They were most likely to be poets and least likely to be play-



wrights. This may have been a result of the latter's rampant promiscuity; more than 40 per cent of them were notorious for their sexual behaviour, compared with 20 per cent of

novelists/poets, and only 14 per cent of poets.

Dr Felix Post, emeritus physician at The Bethlem Royal Hospital and the Maudsley Hospital, London, collected data from the post-mortem biographies of the writers, and compared the frequency of various abnormalities between poets, playwrights, and prose fiction writers.

His controversial conclusion is that "greater inner turmoil and neural (nerve cell) activity involved in writing prose and plays" may result in the lower frequency of depressive disorders among poets.

Dr Post was building on a previous study published in 1994 of 291 world-famous men which concluded that writers were twice as likely to suffer

depression and alcohol-related problems as other creative types, including painters, musicians, philosophers, and some scientists.

The prevalence of personality deviations in the group of 100 writers was 30 per cent, higher than that in the 1994 study (20 per cent) and considerably higher than the incidence in the general population.

There was also a much higher incidence in the study group of anxiety-depressive disorder (60 per cent) than of schizoid disorders (8 per cent) or of the anti-social, histrionic and narcissistic traits (23 per cent) which are most frequently encountered among the general population.

In conclusion, Dr Post said that poets, who had been

excluded from his 1994 study because of their reputed mental and social instability, had been misjudged.

Alcoholism was at its lowest in poets (31 per cent) and highest in playwrights (54 per cent), with only three poets (Berryman, Hart Crane and Pope) and one novelist/poet experiencing alcoholic psychoses.

Overall, the study suggests that the difference between success and failure for a writer – be it poetry, prose or plays – may be a dysfunctional family background. Three-quarters of the group studied hailed from families with a psychiatric history. Almost 30 per cent had some family experience of alcoholism, and nearly a quarter experience of mental illness.

Leading article, page 16

EU backs pensioner over bus pass row

HEATHER MILLS
Home Affairs Correspondent

Retired men have won another victory in their fight for equality with women which could cost local authorities millions of pounds – this time in a test case over bus passes.

An advocate-general of the European Court of Justice ruled the Government broke EU equality rules by denying men cut-price passes until the age of 65, while women qualify at 60.

The interim ruling – certain to be upheld by the full court in the summer – opens the floodgates to refund claims from thousands of men and will be seized upon by Euro-sceptics as another costly interference in Britain's right to make its own laws. There are an estimated 1.5 million men aged 60 to 64.

It comes only six months after a similar judgment which forced the Government to give free prescriptions to men at 60 – the same age as for women – and at a cost of £40m a year.

Ministers had the choice of raising women's age of entitlement to 65 but decided not to risk the electoral unpopularity.

The Government had already made provision to equalise the retirement age at 65 for men and women between 2010 and 2020, and the prescription age will go up at the same time.

In the test case brought by pensioner Stanley Atkins, the advocate-general of the European Court of Justice decided yesterday that Government breached EU equality rules, by making him wait until he was 65 for his cut-price bus pass, while women could get their at 60.

Mr Atkins, a retired garage mechanic from Ketley Bank, Shropshire, said: "This is an important step along the road to putting right a major injustice."

His victory was welcomed by campaigners for the elderly. Sally Greengross, director general of Age Concern said: "Public transport is vital to older people's freedom and independence. Age Concern would like to see the introduction of a national concession scheme for all those over the age of 60."

But representatives of local authorities were concerned at the effects on local authority budgets. Councils have no legal obligations to run the schemes and may choose to scrap them, or introduce a common age qualification of 65, rather than meet the cost – possibly millions – of subsidising men from the age of 60, they warned.

The Government had argued that concessionary travel on public transport was linked to a person's pensionable age, was not a social security benefit and was therefore not covered by the 1979 EU directive, governing equal treatment.

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Police arrest 17 in illegal ticket sales inquiry

WILL BENNETT

Police raided the historic National Sporting Club run by Bob Willis, the former England cricketer, yesterday as part of an investigation into alleged illegal ticket sales for this year's European football championships and the FA Cup final.

Seventeen people were arrested in raids on 11 companies in London, which police suspect have been offering unauthorised tickets for either Euro '96, which takes place in England in June, or the Cup Final in 10 days' time.

Although no tickets were found during the raids, detectives believe that some companies specialising in lucrative hospitality deals may have been planning to use stolen tickets or obtain supplies from foreign Euro '96 allocations.

But David Willis, a director of the National Sporting Club and brother of the former England fast bowler, last night denied any wrongdoing and

said that the club believed that it had been authorised to sell tickets for Euro '96.

"As far as we are concerned everything we have done from the word go has been completely legal and therefore we were completely astonished to get a visit from the constabulary this morning," said Mr Willis, who took over the club with his brother five years ago.

"We applied for tickets for Euro '96 on official forms about seven months ago. We then found a hospitality suite, which is an office block overlooking Wembley stadium and promoted packages for match tickets and hospitality varying in price from £150 to £350.

"We are offering a very high-class hospitality deal where people are entertained to unlimited amounts of champagne before being given a first-class four-course meal and a seat at the match."

The police raid lasting several hours was a severe embarrassment for the club which is

based at the Café Royal in London and was founded 105 years ago by the Earl of Lonsdale and the Marquess of Queensberry. For many years it administered boxing in Britain.

A Metropolitan Police spokesman said yesterday: "Making an offer to sell or to be able to provide tickets is itself an offence if you are not authorised to do so. All the places we went to were not authorised therefore, if any of them have entered deals to provide tickets then that is an offence."

Alec McGivern, media relations manager for Euro '96, which is being organised by the Football Association, said: "Our terms and conditions clearly state that tickets must not be sold at a price higher than the face value. They must also not be sold as part of a hospitality package without the FA's prior consent."

"If it becomes clear that our terms and conditions have been broken we will seek to take the necessary action."



Out of the shadows: Leanne Benjamin, who plays the title role in Kenneth MacMillan's production of 'Anastasia', makes her entrance on roller skates. The Royal Ballet production opens at Covent Garden tomorrow. Photograph: Laurie Lewis

Fan attacked by Cantona denies provocation

A football fan yesterday accused the Manchester United player Eric Cantona of launching an unprovoked attack on him during a Premier League match last season.

Matthew Simmons was appearing at Croydon Magistrates' Court where he is charged with two counts of using threatening language and behaviour during the match between Crystal Palace and Manchester United at Selhurst Park, south London, on 25 January 1995.

Millions of television viewers saw United's French striker aim a kung-fu kick at Mr Simmons, who was standing in the crowd, and then throw a punch at him as he made his way to the tunnel after being sent off.

The court was told by prosecution witnesses that Mr Simmons provoked the assault by hurling a torrent of obscene and abusive language at Cantona.

But Mr Simmons, 21, a double-glazing fitter, of Thornton Heath, south London, denied using language which the prosecution says was designed to bait the player. He said: "After Eric Cantona had been sent off I re-

alised that Richard Shaw [a Crystal Palace player] needed treatment and that this was a pause in the game and would give me the chance to go to the toilet. I was casually walking down the stairs and as I got to the bottom of the aisle Eric Cantona was walking along the line. We simultaneously met and the crowd was fairly noisy and everyone was cheering and noisy and pleased that he had been sent off, me included.

"I was shouting 'Off, off, off', and I was pointing towards the dressing room 'cos that's what you do at football games. At no time was I doing anything else than pointing. I did not use any language of this kind. At no stage did I swear and I am quite certain of that."

"As far as I am concerned I was doing nothing wrong to deserve these actions. I was teasing Cantona but there is a big difference between a criminal offence and what you would call banter at a football match."

The magistrates decided that there was a case to answer on both charges, and the trial was adjourned until today.

Top broadcast award for Chris Evans

BBC disc jockey Chris Evans was yesterday named Broadcaster of the Year in the Sony Radio Awards. The win partially vindicated the decision by Controller of Radio One, Matthew Bannister, to modernise the station.

Evans's Radio One Breakfast Show draws a weekly audience of more than 7 million listeners and is the most popular single radio show in the UK.

His success follows Mr Bannister's decision to axe several leading DJs and move veteran Steve Wright from the premier morning programme.

Last week Evans extended his Radio One contract, worth a reputed £400,000, until the end of

1997. His programme was beaten into second place by rivals Russ and Jono of Virgin Radio in the music-based breakfast show category.

BBC Radio 5 Live's coverage of the Ryder Cup play-off between Philip Walton and Jay Haas last year received Gold awards for best sports programme and best event coverage.

There was further glory for the BBC as Dr Anthony Clare's interview with round-the-world walker Ffion Campbell won the Interview of the Year trophy.

The Music Presenter of the Year award went to Radio 3's Brian Kay for his Sunday morning show.

New drought warning

NICHOLAS SCHOON
Environment Correspondent

Much of England has suffered five months of below average rainfall over the past year, a drought report from the Government's new Environment Agency warns today.

Serious shortfalls in reservoirs and underground rock aquifers have resulted, but the problems were made worse by bitterly cold winter weather, says the report sent to the Secretary of State for the Environment, John Gummer.

Freezing conditions led to a spate of burst pipes, which meant that across most of the country more water had to be

put into the mains than during the previous winter, further stretching the impoverished supplies.

This April had just over 70 per cent of the long-term average rainfall for the month in England and Wales. Since February last year, only September, December and February have had above average. November had exactly the mean and every other month was well under.

If there is another hot, dry summer, then half the country is likely to be put under hosepipe or non-essential use bans, says the agency, which protects the natural water resources of England and Wales. Furthermore, a dozen water

companies are expected to seek permission to take extra water from rivers and boreholes.

Even with average summer rainfall this year, five companies - Yorkshire, North West, South West, Southern and South East - are planning to extend existing drought measures or take additional action.

However, the report says the water companies have learnt from last year's drought, and praises them for spending hundreds of millions of pounds to boost their supplies and distribution networks over the winter. But it warns them not to delay in bringing in restrictions on customers if the drought continues into the summer.

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Richard Branson and 'Tracker' scan the horizon for hassle-free savings

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The company's first product - an index tracking Personal Equity Plan (or PEP for short) - was created as a result of Richard Branson's frustration with the financial services industry. "I read the personal finance pages for 20 years but could never find consistently good performance or fathom out all the meaningless jargon," explains Branson.

Jargon free zone

PEPs should be an integral part of most people's financial plans. But Virgin felt that their potential had never been realised - mainly because of their packaging. "We researched nearly 1,000 PEPs and then designed one to beat them," adds Branson. "We found that the majority of people were simply put off by the way PEPs were shrouded in meaningless financial jargon."

Within a year of launch, Virgin's no-nonsense financial revolution had attracted over 50,000 savers looking for a well-balanced, conservative approach to stock market investment rather than chancing the thrills and spills of a speculative investment strategy.

On the right track

Virgin's strategy is completely straightforward. It doesn't rely on costly, fallible fund managers attempting to guess which shares will perform best. The Virgin Direct PEP tracks the FT-SE Actuaries All-Share Index, which covers more than 900 of the largest companies quoted on the London Stock Exchange.

Simplicity

Tony Wood of Virgin Direct picks up the story: "We've made it incredibly simple for individual investors to participate in the returns of the stock market while spreading the risk. The easy option is to leave spare cash in a current account, earning a pitifully low rate of interest. Most of us just can't be bothered to go through the hassle of looking for a better home for our savings, even though we know that it's the sensible thing to do. With history showing that shares tend to provide better returns than other types of investment over five years or more, our Growth PEP gives everyone the chance to reap the rewards."

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Richard Branson

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300 branches to close: Four-day weeks to cope with 15,000 job losses

NatWest plan to share workload among staff

BARRIE CLEMENT
Labour Editor

In a highly-unusual initiative to ease the pain of a massive "downsizing" operation, National Westminster Bank is negotiating a scheme to share the work among its employees.

Management and unions are hoping to thrash out an agreement on part-time working and the introduction of four-day weeks in order to cope with cuts estimated to mean the equivalent of 15,000 jobs.

The bank yesterday revealed to its 48,000 staff a three-year restructuring plan involving the increased use of new technology and the closure of 300 smaller branches out of 2,100.

However, the company gave a guarantee that there would be no compulsory redundancies this year and refused to accept union estimates of the extent of the cutbacks.

The announcement comes at a time when the banking industry as a whole is facing about 30,000 redundancies over the next few years. Other banks could now be forced to adopt NatWest's more co-operative

approach to industrial relations.

Senior NatWest sources confirmed there had been a change in managerial philosophy at the bank which was illustrated by the creation of a world-wide staff council. The forum was created in anticipation of a Brussels directive which would eventually have forced NatWest, along with other British-based multinationals, to create a works council.

Rory Murphy, general secretary of the NatWest Staff Association, said the bank should take the credit for involving unions in business decisions instead of announcing an "annual cull" of jobs. Management's business forecasts matched those of the association, he said.

"We know there are going to be job losses, but we don't want to be standing in the middle of the M3 trying to stop the traffic. We want to ensure that with management co-operation the cuts are made fairly and equitably."

Alan Ainsworth, chief negotiator at NatWest for the Banking Insurance and Finance Union (Bifu) said senior man-

agers had abandoned their strategy of railroading cuts through as they did in 1992 when there were large scale redundancies. Since 1991 more than 16,000 staff have left the bank - 4,400 of them last year.

Mr Ainsworth said the new policy of was not based on altruism but self-interest. "NatWest's record so far has not been exemplary. The new policy is based on business imperatives and a practical recognition that it is better to do it with the co-operation of the unions," he said.

The bank had made pre-tax profits of £1.75bn in the year to December compared with £1.59bn in the previous 12 months and therefore should be able to undertake a restructuring exercise without making people compulsorily redundant

in the years to come, Mr Ainsworth said.

Tony Warren, managing director of NatWest's retail banking subsidiary, refused to confirm union estimates of the scale of cuts, but said the bank had to face the fact that it needed fewer employees. "We believe it is in the interests of staff, shareholders and customers to have good relations with the people who work for us."

He said the bank needed to respond to the growing use of self-service banking through cash machines and by telephone. There was a continuous reduction in the number of people visiting many of the branches.

According to Bifu, Barclays Bank has shed 21,800 staff since 1990, Lloyds 15,628 and Midland 9,600.



Burning ambition: Young Jeremy Way is fastened into the DB2, a contender for the Shell Helix Mileage Marathon at Mallory Park, Leicester, on July 19. Entrants will target the world fuel efficiency record of 7,591mpg. Photograph: Edward Sykes

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DAILY POEM

Bike Ride on a Roman Road

By Alice Oswald

*This Roman road - eye's axis
over the earth's rococo curve -
is a road's road to ride in a dream.*

*I am bound to a star,
my own feet shoving me swiftly.*

Everything turns but the North is the same.

*Foot foot, under the neck-high bracken
a little random man, with his head in a bad
controversy of midgets,
flickers away singing Damn Damn*

*and the line he runs is serpentine,
everything happens at sixes and sevens,
the jump and the ditch and the crooked stile ...*

*and my two eyes are floating in the fields,
my mouth is on a branch, my hair
is miles behind me making tributaries
and I have had my heart distracted out of me,
my skin is blowing slowly about without me*

and now I have no hands and now I have no feet.

*This is the road itself
riding a bone bicycle through my head.*

After reading Classics at university, Alice Oswald trained at Wisley as a gardener, and has since worked at Bapley Park and the Chelsea Physic Garden. Homer, she declares, made her a gardener, but gardening gave her her poetic subject. Carol Ann Duffy noted that "birds, weather, plants, are present in a thrilling way in both the language and the forms of her poems". This poem appears in *The Thing in the Gap-stone Stile*, published by Oxford University Press at £6.99.

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Doctors warn of transplant danger

LIZ HUNT
Health Editor

A group of doctors and lawyers is seeking to halt research into animal-to-human organ transplants because of the risks of transmitting unknown bacteria and viruses to man.

Doctors and Lawyers for Responsible Medicine (DLRM) is appealing to the Government to impose a moratorium on xenotransplants until more is known about the effects on human health and the environment.

The first xenotransplant could take place here later this year, using an organ from a pig which has been genetically engineered to have human molecules in its tissues (known as transgenic transplantation). This will, in theory, reduce the chances of rejection. Some doctors believe that xenotransplantation is the only solution to the current severe shortage of donor organs.

But in a letter to Stephen Dorrell, the Secretary of State for Health, DLRM says: "Common sense should tell us that transgenic transplants actually represent one experimental technique (the production of transgenic animals) superimposed on yet another experimental technique (the transplantation of transgenic organs into human beings). This situation translates into a statistical nightmare, since there

is an exponential increase in unknown risk."

At its relaunch in London yesterday, the group – formerly an anti-vivisection pressure group known as Doctors in Britain Against Animal Experiments – warned that even the use of disease-free animals was no guarantee of safety.

Dr André Menaché, president of DLRM, said that viruses in a new environment may be dormant, or mutate into dangerous new forms, or combine with human viruses. By introducing these unknown viruses – if they did indeed exist – in transplanted animal organs with human characteristics, the body's own immune system was circumvented, he said.

"We can't allow this sort of thing to be unleashed into the human population. Even if it were to work, the potential threat to public health would far outweigh any possible benefits to a few individuals."

However, Imutran, the Cambridge-based company which is pioneering the production of transgenic animals, accused the group of scaremongering by a group of "recycled anti-vivisectionists".

Christopher Samler, chief executive of Imutran, said no transgenic transplant would take place until the Government and medical establishment were satisfied about potential risks. News analysis, page 15



Rural heritage: Berthlwyd Farm – 'one of the most important farms the National Trust owns, a relic in the best sense'

Photograph: Rob Stratton

Family farm where time has stood still

MICHAEL PRESTAGE

For five generations Berthlwyd Farm has been owned by the Llewellyn family and in that time they have shunned the dictates of modern farming, ensuring the flora and fauna on their land reflects more the late 19th than late 20th century.

The conservation value of the 162-acre farm in the Brecon Beacons National Park has already been recognised. It was

acquired by the National Trust in 1992 with Jim and Janet Llewellyn staying on as tenants.

Now, though, the economics of the industry mean it is no longer viable to farm traditionally. And in a move that could be repeated on many of the trust's 1,200 other farms, in England and Wales, a strategy is being drawn up to subsidise the farming so that the environmental value of the site can be preserved. Phil Park, the

trust's property manager in South Wales, said: "Generations using a particular farming system have produced a farm of outstanding value. This is one of the most important farms the National Trust owns. It is a relic in the best sense. There are quite remarkable hay meadows, which in spring are full of wild flowers and orchids."

The trust wants the farm to remain as a working model, with the people being regarded as

important as any building or wildlife species. But it has encountered difficulties because the bulk of grants available are either to increase productivity or to mothball areas – neither of which is appropriate.

Philip James, the trust's land agent in South Wales, said: "We are keen to preserve the farm not as a remnant of the past, but because this way of farming is far more sustainable. We see Berthlwyd as a bridge between the past and the future."

A year's grace has already been found using the trust's funds while a long-term solution is sought. Negotiations are in hand with the Countryside Council for Wales to develop a 10-year plan. The council has already classified the farm as a site of special scientific interest.

"If the National Trust had not bought the farm, we would have had to leave. We hope we can continue," said Mr Llewellyn.

Oyston jury inspects mansion

Jurors were taken by coach on a 70-mile trip yesterday to visit the country mansion home where the multi-millionaire businessman Owen Oyston is alleged to have raped two teenage models.

The trial judge, Mr Justice McCullough, counsel and court staff accompanied the jury, together with Mr Oyston, on the journey from Liverpool Crown Court to secluded Claughton Hall – a 16th century 50-roomed house, which is set in 1,500 acres in the Forest of Bowland near Lancaster.

Mr Oyston, 62, chairman of Blackpool Football Club, denies raping the two girls, both of whom were models with a Manchester agency. He denies attacking the first when she was 18, between January 1988 and December 1989, and raping and indecently assaulting the second girl, who was just 16, at the end of 1991.

The court was told last week that both were led to believe Mr Oyston could help their modelling careers.

The first model has spent nearly three days in the witness box being questioned over her claims, and is due to resume giving evidence today. The second, whom Mr Oyston is alleged to have forced into oral sex, has yet to give evidence.

The jury was driven up the narrow country lane leading to the house, described by one of the alleged victims as "like a castle". Inside, they were shown the foyer, dining room and master bedroom – which contains the antique four-poster bed on which the rapes allegedly took place – together with its adjoining bathroom.

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OUT NOW

People feel cheated over care

NICHOLAS TIMMINS
Public Policy Editor

The public's faith in state-led funding for care in old age has been seriously undermined by its extensive means-testing, a study funded by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation showed yesterday.

The existence of the National Health Service and the obligation to pay tax and national insurance has led people to expect that care for older people would be free at the point of delivery, the study found.

But they feel their national insurance payments have been misused – paid out to provide care now rather than invested to provide a fund for care in the future.

And the present means-testing

of savings and capital – including taking houses into account – is strongly resented.

"People felt they had been given a false promise by the state that long-term care for older people would be provided free at the point of delivery," the study said.

And means-testing was seen as unfair for penalising the thrifty while the spendthrift were eligible for state aid.

To win the support of the public, the payments for any new system for long-term care should be dedicated to the purpose, properly invested and should provide a guaranteed level of care, the study, which was carried out by Social and Community Planning Research, found.

The findings come as the Government is due to publish

a consultation paper next week offering new public/private "partnership" deals over long-term care. Those who used part of their pensions, lump sums or insurance cover to provide themselves with long-term care will be allowed to keep an equivalent sum free of means-tests if they then need state-funded help.

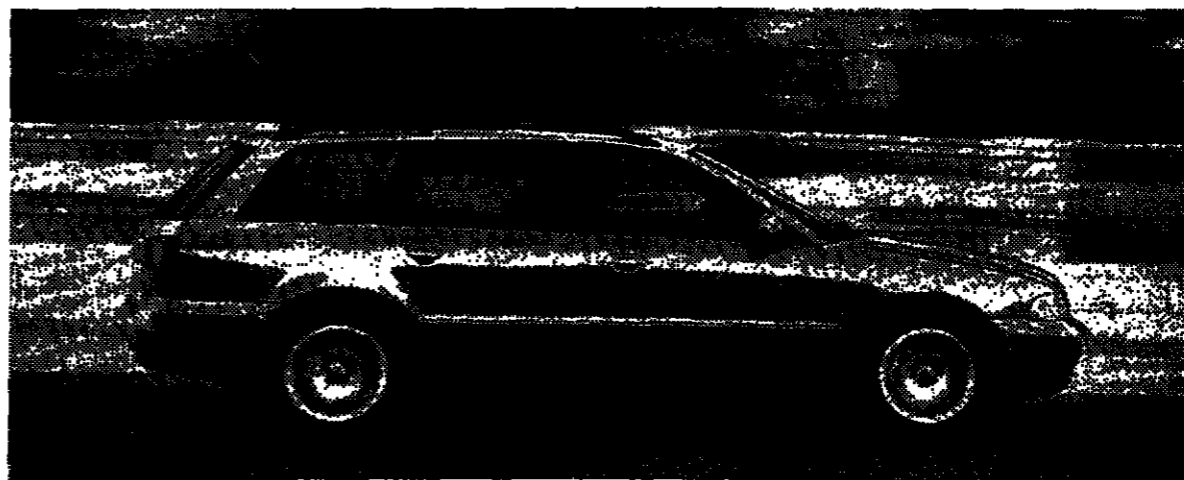
But ministers have ruled out creating a new funded social insurance scheme to pay for long-term care.

The findings – from qualitative discussion groups and not opinion polling – show the public are doubtful that the state can meet the demand for long-term care. There was some support for younger people, in particular, having to start planning to pay for their own care through insurance.

Others, however, opposed any form of private funding. There was greater willingness for individuals to be asked to pay towards the "hotel" costs in care homes, with the nursing and social care provided free – an option expected to be trailed by an inquiry into long-term care by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation which is due to complete work shortly.

And there are distinctly mixed attitudes to the family's responsibility to care for its elderly relatives, with considerable support for some form of payment scheme for those who do the caring.

The findings suggest that "society can no longer rely on the level of unpaid support currently provided," Rebecca Diba, the lead researcher on the project, said.



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مكتبة الامير

Tories hope for sea-change in once-blue resort

NICHOLAS TIMMINS
Public Policy Editor

Bournemouth is a resort of mixed and powerful emotion for the Conservatives. It was the scene in 1986 of their recovery from the doldrums of Margaret Thatcher's second term when "The Next Moves Forward" conference provided the springboard for her 1987 win.

It was there in 1990 that she dismissed the Liberal Democrats as a "dead parrot" days before they swept Eastbourne in a by-election and weeks before she fell as leader. And it was in May 1991 that the Liberal Democrats ended a century of Conservative control in the once true-blue town, taking control from the Tories to run a minority administration.

Now, a decade on from 1986, it is on Bournemouth and neighbouring Poole that the Tories are pinning their hopes of being able to claim that they have once again turned the corner – wresting back control in a contest which the Liberal Democrats believe will finally give them a majority on the council.

It is a difficult contest to call.

Bournemouth council

No overall control. Liberal Democrat minority administration.

Liberal Democrats 26, Conservative 23, Labour 6, Independents 4. All out.

MPs: David Atkinson (C) Bournemouth East, John Butterfill (C) Bournemouth West.

Bournemouth has begun to recover from the recession, the Liberal Democrats pointing to £30m of private investment being drawn to the town in recent years. The centre looks brighter. The airport has been sold and redeveloped. Cycle ways, rubbish recycling and closed circuit television display the Liberal Democrats' green credentials and skill at pavement politics while this year the town managed a small cut in the council tax.

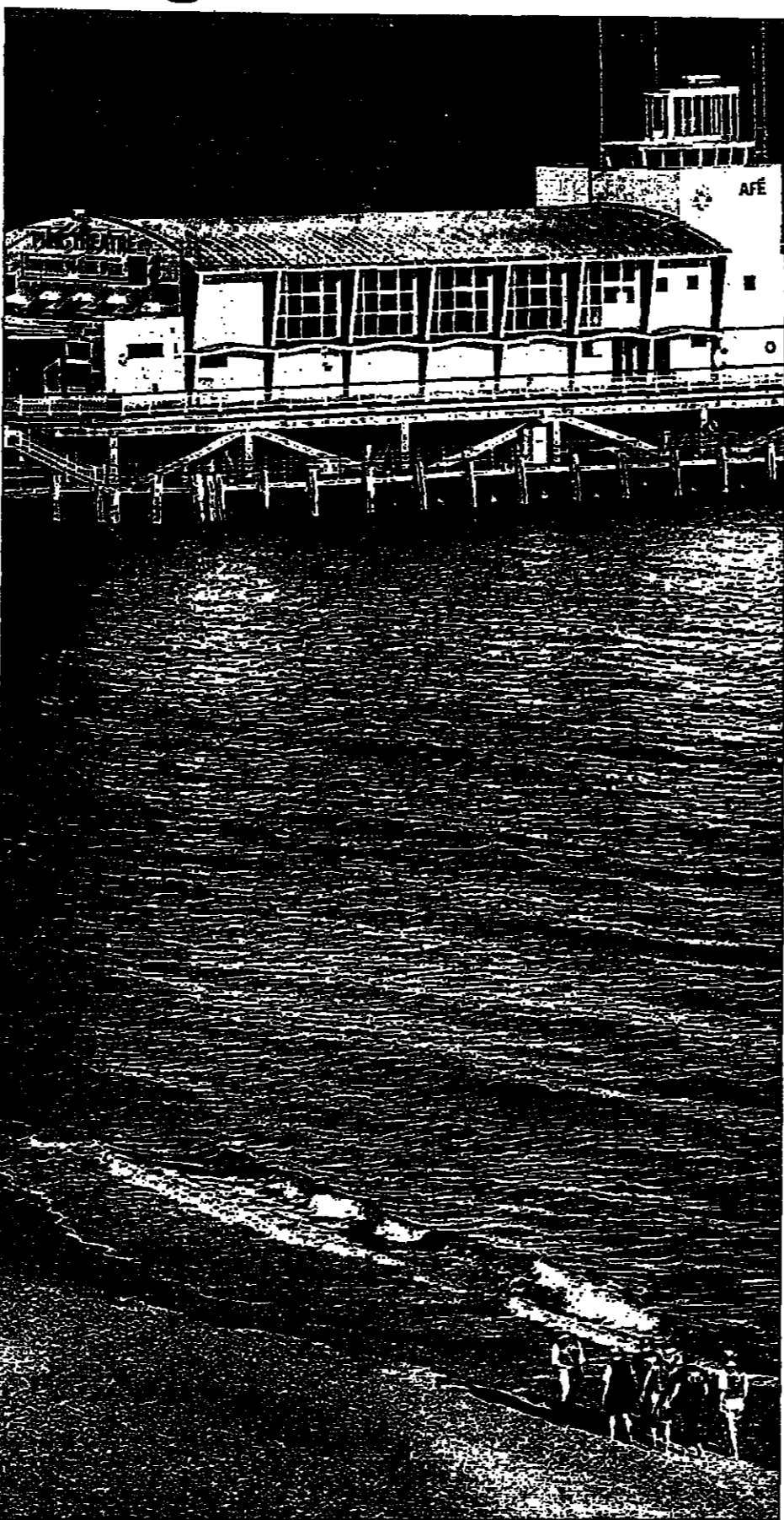
But along the beach at once genteel, now down-at-heel, Boscombe, the pier is closed, the crazy golf shut and the lavatories boarded up due to vandalism. The area displays some of the drink, drugs and prostitution problems usually linked to inner cities. Bournemouth as a whole is evidently less blue-tinted than once it was.

The Tories' high hopes are pinned on the elections being all-out for a shadow unitary authority after last year's all-out elections in the town. They are

thus defending seats won during the party's worst local government performance – not those taken on the relative high of 1992 which form the core of tomorrow's contest elsewhere. Added to that, last year Bournemouth bucked the trend – the Tories holding what they held, dashing Liberal Democrat hopes of overall control. No-one is quite sure why. The Tory vote may have reached its bedrock bottom. But the Blair effect may have played its part. Last year, Labour was the only party to raise its vote in every ward, a performance that produced no gains but leaves Ben Gower, the firmly left-of-centre Labour group leader, hoping for additions to the six seats Labour holds. "A lot of people who voted Liberal just to get the Tories out have become much more confident in the national party and are beginning to come back to us. We don't get the animosity that we saw on the doorsteps in the middle Eighties," he argues.

But some of last year's anger with the Tories appears to have waned as well. David Atkinson, the genial Bournemouth East MP, out canvassing in a ward which looks as though it should be solidly Tory but has three Liberal Democrat councillors, still receives the odd earful. But elsewhere there are smiles and pledges to turn out, offset by a sense that some of these will stay at home, reflecting the private assessment of Conservative agents that the reaction on the doorstep is at best "mixed".

John Millward, the Liberal Democrat leader, finds talk of a Tory revival "very hard to believe". The only real uncertainty, he says, is whether the Labour vote will harden at the Liberal Democrats' expense. "I can't see Labour making in-roads as such," he says, "but the odd hundred votes here and there could be sufficient to let the Tories back in." Brian Mawhinney's best hope in the once true-blue town it seems, may be Tony Blair.



On the rise: Private investment is helping Bournemouth's recovery Photograph: Peter Macdonald

Major rejects 'fantasy' of drawn knives

- Local elections 'no threat' to leader
- Ashdown questions Tory loyalty

John Major shrugged off as "fantasy" yesterday the latest bout of speculation that he might stand down if the Tories receive a thrashing in tomorrow's local council elections.

Talk of leadership ambitions stirring again in the breast of Michael Heseltine provided Labour backbenchers and Paddy Ashdown with useful ammunition for the last Question Time before polling day.

Mike O'Brien asked the Prime Minister if he had "ever discussed an understanding whereby if the Conservatives do not do well in the local government elections, he will make way for the Deputy Prime Minister?" The Warwickshire North MP said Mr Major would have the support of every Labour member to stay on.

The reply was standard Major. "I suspect the honourable gentleman is in mischief-making mode," he said. Then, as Tory MPs shook their heads, he added: "Clearly he wasn't in mischief-making mode. Clearly he was just being silly."

Mr Ashdown said it would understand that it would be "totally unacceptable" if, once again, Conservative MPs should seek to change the Prime Min-

ister while denying the country the chance to change the Government. "Will Mr Major confirm that if after Thursday they seek to get rid of him, he will make sure that we have a chance to get rid of them?" the Liberal Democrat leader asked.

Of course Mr Major would confirm no such thing. "I fear Mr Ashdown is dealing in fantasy again," he replied.

George Foulkes, Labour MP for Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley, told the Prime Minister it was not just Mr Heseltine who was after his job. "It's the Home Secretary [Michael Howard] and the Health Secretary [Stephen Dorrell] as well," Mr Foulkes said.

Tony Blair focused on a leaked Home Office document showing that, contrary to Mr Howard's claims, crime has been rising – figures Mr Major said were not correct. But the Labour leader also included some election lines. "People are less safe in their homes, less secure in their jobs, less confident about the future. It is precisely because of that weakness and failure and incompetence that people will be so justified in punishing your party this Thursday," he said. Mr Major dis-

Inside Parliament
Stephen Goodwin

missed the remarks as "a long time coming and not worth waiting for".

The most naked of Mr Major's rivals, John Redwood had bounced up earlier during environment questions to do his bit for the Tory election cause. "Thursday matters and people must vote Conservative for lower taxes," the former Secretary of State for Wales said.

John Gummer, Secretary of State for the Environment, had the figures. "It costs £225 a year more to have a Labour council than it does to have a Conservative council," he said.

But Labour alleged support for councils was "skewed" to help Tory-controlled Westminster council. Hilary Armstrong, an Opposition spokeswoman said that if the same level of support was given to Trafford council tax payers would get a £527 refund, £320 in Rochdale or £145 in Oldham. It was a "fiddle" and the voters knew it.

Late deal saves Housing Bill

JOHN RENTOUL
Political Correspondent

The Government avoided defeat by just two votes on its battered Housing Bill in the Commons last night, after making a series of frantic behind-the-scenes concessions to backbench Conservative MPs.

But it suffered an embarrassing defeat in a Labour ambush on a key Commons committee which voted against a rise in prescription charges. The standing committee on

Statutory Instruments voted 9-8, with two Tory MPs absent, against the rise, in what Donald Dewar, Labour's Chief Whip, hailed as a victory in his campaign of "trench warfare" to harry the Government.

On the Housing Bill, John Gummer, the Secretary of State of the Environment, risked the fury of the Tory pro-family lobby by conceding the principle of equal tenancy rights for homosexual couples.

In a last-minute deal with Tory gay rights campaigners

Michael Brown (Brigg and Cleethorpes) and Edwina Currie (Derbyshire South), ministers agreed to amend the wording of proposed guidelines for local councils.

The guidelines will recommend that councils should "normally" treat a same-sex relationship in the same way as a heterosexual one. This concession was enough to secure Mr Brown and Mrs Currie's support to reverse the Government's defeat at the committee stage last month.

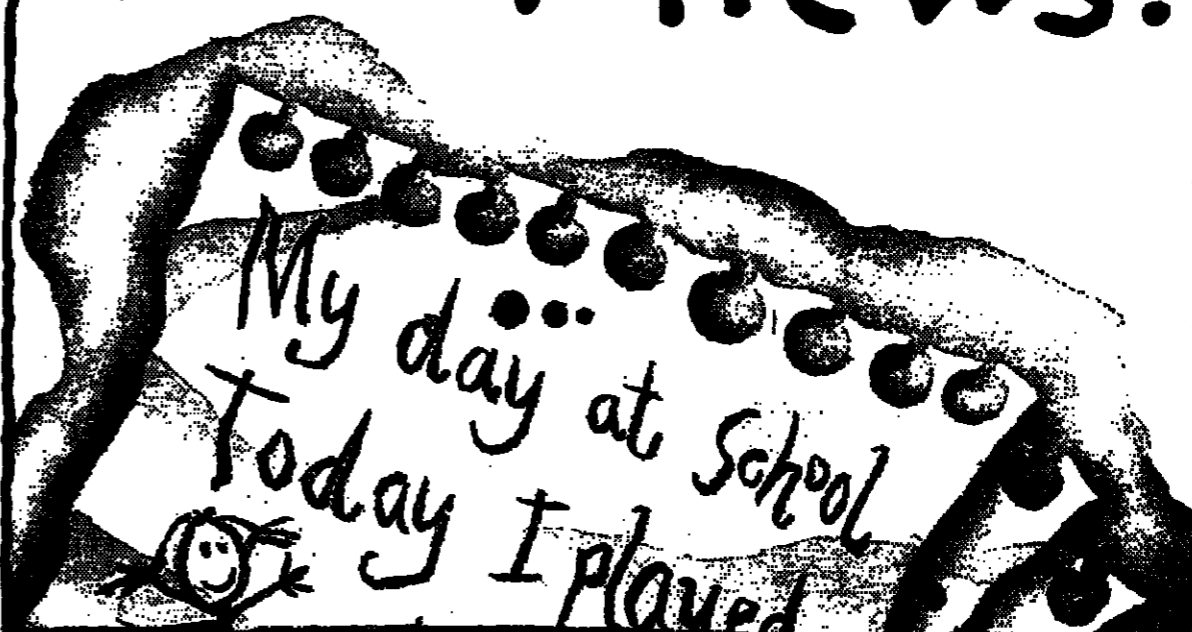
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Tasmania massacre: As Hobart struggles to deal with its horror, a disturbing portrait of the gunman emerges

City feels killer's legacy of bitterness

ROBERT MILLIKEN
Hobart

"An eye for an eye" reads the chilling, spray-painted slogan along the front wall of the Royal Hobart Hospital. Somebody has made a vain attempt to paint the slogan out. Meanwhile, however, hospital staff have received death threats for continuing to treat Martin Bryant for the burns he suffered when the Port Arthur holiday lodge, where he took three hostages and held police at bay in an 18-hour siege, burned down. There is enormous bitterness and anger in Hobart.

As Tasmanians try to come to grips with the horror of the Port Arthur massacre, 28-year-old Bryant, the man accused of slaughtering 35 people in a Rambo-style shooting spree, lies in a Hobart hospital, where he was formally charged yesterday in a bizarre bedside court hearing. The charge related to the murder of Kate Scott, a 21-year-old who was among the victims of the massacre last Sunday. Further charges will follow.

Helen Gray, of the Tasmanian nurses' association, said her colleagues were having a tough time reconciling their professional duties with their feelings of rage. Police stepped up security, as thousands of Hobart people prepared to stop work today to join an ecumenical church service attended by John

Howard, the Prime Minister, and other political leaders. Bryant lay silently in bed as he was charged. He entered no plea. Elsewhere in the same hospital, 16 of the 19 people injured in the shooting spree were also receiving treatment, some in serious conditions.

Newspapers around Australia splashed Bryant's photograph yesterday, staring wistfully from beneath shoulder-length blonde hair. "This is the Man", announced the front page of the *Mercury*, of Hobart. "He Killed 35", declared the *Herald Sun*, in Melbourne. "Face of a Killer", proclaimed the *Australian*.

Meanwhile, former friends and neighbours in Tasmania painted a disturbing portrait of Bryant as a complex young man, a loner who was alienated from his family, who inherited a fortune from a spinster twice his age and who had lately developed a morbid fascination with guns.

Bryant was born in Tasmania in May 1967. His father was a dock worker. While he was still at school, he became friendly with Helen Harvey, heiress to the Tattersalls gambling fortune. She became his benefactor and took him in to her mansion in the Hobart suburb of New Town, which Bryant later inherited from her, along with a farm at Copping, a hamlet near Port Arthur.

Neighbours remember them



Light in the darkness: Students light candles in St Mary's Cathedral, Hobart, to commemorate the dead of Port Arthur Photograph: Steve Holland

as an odd pair. They kept up to 40 cats, dogs and birds on their farm as well as a pig which, locals claim, Bryant would sometimes sleep with. They would occasionally go for drives in one of Miss Harvey's expensive cars with a miniature pony in the back seat, which they would then take for walks in the countryside around Port Arthur.

When Miss Harvey died in a car crash near Copping about four years ago, she left Bryant property and other assets valued at about £300,000. His father moved to the farm after her

death, but their relationship was strained.

About a year after Miss Harvey died, Bryant's father went missing. Neighbours alerted police who found his body floating in a farm dam with lead diving weights around his neck. Some people were suspicious about both deaths, but no charges have ever been laid.

John and Sue Featherstone, farmers who live next door to the farm, which Bryant has since sold, have unhappy memories of their former neighbour. Mr Featherstone said

yesterday that Bryant once invited his wife and daughter in for tea.

"Then he herded them outside and told them not to come back ever or he'd shoot them," he said. "He would go from being a 25-year-old to a 12-year-old delinquent kid, just like that. Miss Harvey once told us that he'd threatened to shoot his own father." The Featherstones reported their encounters and fears about Bryant to police, but their complaints were not followed up.

On Monday, when police

raided the deserted mansion in New Town where Bryant lives, they took away boxes of ammunition and a firearm. Phil Wilkinson, an inspector with the Hobart criminal investigation bureau, said yesterday: "He had developed a growing interest in firearms quite recently. It's my understanding that none of his family knew he had firearms."

Bryant is believed to have purchased his guns, including two semi-automatic military-style weapons used in the Port Arthur shootings, by mail order.

He was able to do so because Tasmania's gun laws up to this week had been the least restrictive in Australia.

Given the degree of public outrage over the killings, the Tasmanian state government yesterday announced that it would impose an immediate ban on the future sale of self-loading military weapons. Meanwhile, Australia's federal and state governments are to hold talks next week in a bid to introduce tough, uniform gun laws.

Letters, page 16

Dunblane 'copycat' theory divides experts

MICHAEL STREETER

Experts were divided yesterday over claims that the Tasmanian massacre may have been triggered by global TV and radio coverage of the Dunblane shootings in March.

Dr Guy Cumberbatch, senior lecturer in applied psychology at Aston University, described as "uninformed and disgraceful" the suggestion by the FBI's chief psychiatrist, Dr Park Deitz, that Martin Bryant's murder spree was a copycat killing.

"To state that TV coverage of Dunblane is behind what happened in Tasmania is absolute nonsense. This man is simply

speculating on what was going on in the mind of Martin Bryant. He doesn't know.

"There is no place for this kind of psychiatry," said Dr Cumberbatch, an expert on violence and the media.

However, Dr Deitz's remarks, were supported by Dr Harry Jacobs, executive officer for the Society of Clinical Psychiatrists. He said: "People are very suggestible. This kind of TV coverage puts shooting in everybody's mind, in your mind, in my mind. If one is a bit paranoid the idea is implanted."

He said he would like to see less "instant sensationalism" in the reporting of such events and a more sober approach.

Dr Deitz put forward his controversial theory in the United States, suggesting that Bryant may even have been consciously trying to beat the number of victims killed by Thomas Hamilton in Dunblane.

In a parallel argument, critics in the US also claim that the cult movie *Natural Born Killers* has triggered a number of copycat murders.

Dr Deitz said: "Presumably what happened was this man was sitting in Australia watching the emotional television pictures from Dunblane and more than the mourning parents he saw people vowing to change policy and ban dangerous weapons."

"He probably thought to himself, 'I am as powerful as he is. The world needs to know my suffering and feel my rage'."

Consultant clinical psychologist Susan Hope-Borland said she believed there could be a link between TV coverage and later killings. "If something is brought to someone's attention then it becomes more salient in their mind - it increases their range of options."

However, Dr Cumberbatch said that while the link between TV coverage and later killings was theoretically possible, there was simply no evidence of the "clusters" of massacres which such a connection would cause.



Bryant: Did the killings in Dunblane influence him?

Shot Briton's mother saw him on television

RORY MCCARTHY
Press Association

A British mother saw on television her injured son being carried away on a stretcher after the shooting in Tasmania.

Graham Collyer, 33, suffered serious facial injuries in the shooting and is now being treated at the Royal Hobart Hospital. His girlfriend's daughter, 15-year-old Sarah Loughton, was killed.

Mr Collyer, originally from Nottingham, emigrated to Australia six years ago and now lives in Melbourne. He was on holiday in Port Arthur at the time

of the shootings and should have been celebrating his birthday yesterday.

It is thought he was eating in a crowded cafe when the gunman began shooting.

His mother, Diane Collyer, of Lilliker Rise, Arnold, Nottingham, said: "I saw him being carried on a stretcher. We were just numb." She said Mr Collyer's aunt and uncle had flown out to see him.

"They called yesterday and said he was making good progress. He is conscious and as comfortable as can be." Her son is a former signwriter for a Nottingham brewery.

IN BRIEF

South African strikers halt traffic

Johannesburg — Strikers held up traffic and roughed up a political leader in a bid to pressure last-minute negotiations on a new South African constitution. But the one-day strike by the Congress of South African Trade Unions, the country's largest union group, failed to generate much support nationwide as shops, banks and mines operated as normal. AP

Fires rage in US

Los Angeles — Wildfires fuelled by searing temperatures and gusting winds raged across the US, including one blaze threatening the Los Alamos nuclear research plant in New Mexico. Nuclear officials said there was no public health risk. Reuters

Journalists resign

Warsaw — Leading journalists at the city's daily *Zycie Warszawy* announced they would quit, alleging that the new paper planned to curb criticism of the government dominated by ex-Communists.

"We have reasons to believe that this will not be a newspaper that tackles subjects that are uncomfortable for those in power," said an announcement signed by 35 departing journalists. Reuters

Tributes for panda

Madrid — Schoolchildren left flowers at the home of Chu-Lin, Madrid zoo's popular giant panda, a day after the bear's sudden death. Chu-Lin, which officials described as the first panda born in captivity in Europe, will be stuffed and put on display within a month. AP

Briton held

Oradea — A British man, James Callaghan, has been arrested and charged with attempting to smuggle 15 Kurdish and Pakistani illegal immigrants across the Romanian border into Hungary in his truck, prosecutors said. Reuters

Jail for 'slave' pair

Los Angeles — Two brothers who helped run a sweatshop where 81 Thai nationals were held in virtual slavery while stitching clothes for department stores were sentenced to six years in prison. Wirachai and Phanajak Manasurangkun were also ordered to pay \$4.5m in restitution to the workers, who had been held in the small apartment complex surrounded by a razor-wire fence. AP

Skeleton found

Monza — The body of a woman who lay dead in her flat for seven years has been discovered by her ex-husband. Graziella Villa's skeleton was found on a bed in a flat in the centre of this northern Italian town. Villa was last seen alive in 1989 when she was 47 years old. Reuters

Dam disruption

Peking — About 600 schools and 200,000 students face relocation due to the construction in China of the Three Gorges dam, the official *China Daily* said. Reuters

This week in THE INDEPENDENT

This week and every week, Section Two has a new look, with more pages, new features, a daily radio column and an expanded listings section providing Britain's most comprehensive daily guide to going out.

on Monday

A new regular section, Family Life, that deals with the interests and problems of parents and children. Julie Myerson's column also focuses on home life. Plus: a new series - Do we need? - which challenges the icons of modern Britain. And, every Monday unrivalled coverage of the expanding world of information technology in our Network pull-out section.

and in Sport

A 24-page tabloid section with all the action from the weekend's sporting action. Plus: the Monday interview in which a leading figure comes under the microscope, an unbeatable results service, gossip, speculation and fact from behind the scenes and the best in sports photography.

on Tuesday

Health: how wearing a virtual reality helmet could help cure phobias and other psychological problems. Plus: flaky nails are not simply a problem for the vain

but a sign of ill-health, so what can be done about them? Also on Tuesday, fashion, architecture, visual arts and media.

on Wednesday

Bridget Jones's diary continues to chronicle the encounters and exquisite embarrassments in the life of Britain's most-read spinster. Plus: the midweek travel section, your money, finance

and law. In our back pages, Martin Newell, Britain's leading rock poet, and Neil Kerber, one of the country's funniest cartoonists, present their views of the modern world.

on Thursday

All our regular features, including Virginia Ironside's Dilemmas, John Walsh's column, plus film, education

and graduate plus. In the back pages, William Hartston's history of the world in 10 1/2 inches

on Friday

24Seven - a new 20-page pull-out-and-keep entertainment and listings section. Including a complete day-by-day planner for the week ahead, plus

seven-day TV, radio and satellite listings, ticket offers and informed comment on the week's highlights. Plus: eight pages of pop and classical music



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Lesson in peace for boy soldiers

Freetown — The physical scars which 12-year-old Safia Kumba carries after his ordeal as a child soldier with the Sierra Leone army are plain to see: multiple marks on his head and deep welts on his shoulder from machete wounds inflicted by the rebels who left him for dead in the bush. What mental damage he might have incurred is harder to detect but psychiatrists at the Benin home for demobilised child soldiers in the capital, Freetown, are pleased with his progress. He still has nightmares, but after three months at the centre he is mixing well with the 156 other young residents.

"I'm learning to read and write here," said Safia. "Soon I'll go to live with my relatives. When I grow up I would like to be a tailor. I cannot use my arm properly but I think that job does not need too much strength."

Safia was nine when he joined the army. His father was killed when Revolutionary United Front (RUF) rebels attacked and burned his village in the interior. Separated from his mother, whose whereabouts is unknown, Safia attached himself to an army unit which trained him to spy on rebel positions. He was captured by the rebels last year while on a mission.

There are thousands of child soldiers like Safia in Sierra Leone, which has been riven by civil war since 1991. The RUF and the government last month agreed to extend a ceasefire first signed in March but a peace accord has yet to be reached.

Unicef, the United Nations children's fund, estimates there are 2,500 child combatants in Sierra Leone, whose law proscribes enlistment of soldiers under the age of seventeen-and-a-half. Most child fighters are on the rebel side; only 370 of them have been officially demobilised by the army, though another few hundred left of their own accord. No more than a handful of children serving with the RUF have been freed. As many as 1,500 children, abducted by the rebels from their villages, are still living in the bush.

The kids we've dealt with are all traumatised to various de-

David Orr sees the effect on children forced to fight in Sierra Leone's civil war



Young warrior: Safia Kumba, now 12, who was nine when he joined the Sierra Leone army after rebels killed his father

Photograph: David Orr

gress," said Father Michael Hickey, Irish director of Children Associated with the War (CAW), which runs the Benin centre. "They've raped, killed and tortured. Most of them were given alcohol or drugs, mostly marijuana, but sometimes heroin. Often their food had gunpowder put in it to make them fearless. You can imagine the terrible effect such things have on the minds of children, some of them as young as eight or nine."

The children who are taken into care by CAW undergo a six-month psycho-social coun-

selling course before they are resettled with their families. With orphans, of which there are many, efforts are made to locate their nearest relatives. In addition to the Benin centre in Freetown, CAW runs a project in Bo, in the interior. Having reunited 100 children with their families last week, the Bo centre will now take in another group.

In most cases, the children require little persuasion to leave the army. So far, CAW has only rehabilitated children from the government forces, some 500 to date. It hopes the ceasefire will

bring the release of children held by the rebels.

"When we first see them they're hyperactive and have a very short attention span," said Tamba Matturi, a consultant psychiatrist with CAW. "They're unruly, they often wet their beds at night and they have nightmares. A lot of them have flashbacks to the time they were at the front and they show signs of extreme anxiety. These kids were forced to commit terrible atrocities, like beheading people and cutting off limbs, and suffer from guilt feelings. A few are severely depressed,

though most like talking about what they have been through."

The RUF, launched with the backing of the National Patriotic Front of Liberia, has relied heavily on child fighters in its campaign to destabilise the country and overthrow the government. The informed minds of young conscripts prove receptive to indoctrination in the most barbarous of guerrilla methods, particularly when fortified with drink and drugs.

"A lot of children have confessed to atrocities," said Cornelia Williams, of Unicef. "They have participated in at-

tacks on villages where the inhabitants were butchered. We have also had reports of cannibalism and of children being forced to drink the blood of their victims."

The government is planning reception centres for child soldiers but the success of securing the release of those held by the RUF depends on the progress of the peace process. Crucially, the populace has to be persuaded to accept them back into the community: a number of child soldiers coming out of the bush have been victims of revenge attacks.

Finland calls time on drunk awaydays

ADRIAN BRIDGE

Thousands of thirsty Finns packed ferry boats to Estonia yesterday to stock up on duty free drink ahead of tough new import restrictions due to come into force today.

According to a representative of the Tallinn Ferry company in Helsinki, all four crossings to Tallinn were fully booked as customers sought to take advantage of the old regulations one final time. "We have been fantastically busy in the days leading up to the new rules," said the representative. "And it is pretty clear why people have been going across."

Since Estonia regained its independence in 1991, it has become a magnet for heavy drinkers from Finland seeking to avoid the country's 65 per cent tax levy.

Gangs of drunken Finnish revellers have become a regular sight in the streets of Tallinn and journeys home on ferry boats and even planes are sel-

dom made without the maximum allowances of spirits, wines and beers.

Under the new regulations, the import of duty free alcohol into Finland will now be possible only if at least 20 hours has been spent out of the country. The immediate targets will be the day-trippers to Tallinn and nearby Russia, where even greater bargains on alcohol are to be found.

The law will also restrict sales of duty free alcohol within Finland itself. This will be aimed primarily at Russians who have been entering the country with truck loads of illicit liquor to sell off to eager takers at impromptu market places which have been dubbed "Red Squares".

The combined effect of "alcohol tourism" and the "Red Squares" has been to slice 1bn markka (£140m) from annual tax revenues channelled through Alko, the State company which has a monopoly on alcohol sales in Finland.

Belarus clampdown

TONY BARBER
Europe Editor

The pro-Russian government of Belarus yesterday imposed short jail sentences and fines on dozens of opposition activists arrested last week after demonstrating against their country's drift towards union with Russia.

The crackdown had the clear approval of President Alexander Lukashenko, who advocates rapid integration with Russia, and who said after last Friday's protest that he intends to ban all demonstrations.

The protest was timed to coincide with the 10th anniversary of the Chernobyl nuclear accident, which inflicted huge economic damage on Belarus and left it ill-prepared for independence when the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991. However, the rally quickly turned

into one of the largest anti-government demonstrations of Mr Lukashenko's two-year-old presidency, with up to 50,000 people on the streets of the capital, Minsk.

Police dispersed the crowd with batons and several dozen people were reported injured. About 200 demonstrators were arrested, of whom roughly half were quickly released.

The main force behind the demonstrations was the Belarusian Popular Front (BPF). Its leader, Zenon Poznyak, told the crowd Mr Lukashenko's drive to unite Belarus with Russia represented "a quiet occupation of Belarus by Russia".

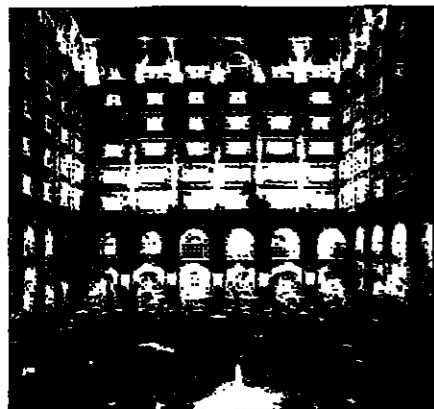
Mr Poznyak went into hiding after the protests and police later raided the BPF headquarters. A party spokesman said the tactics indicated Mr Lukashenko could be about to ban the BPF.

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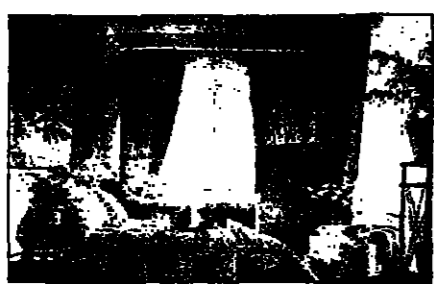


Mexico City

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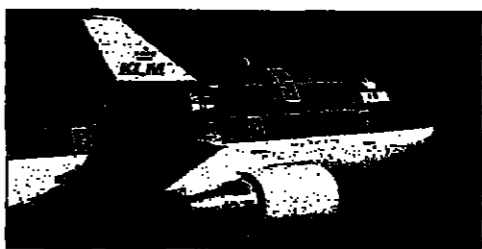
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international

Arithmetic of death that does not add up

Missing in Bosnia: Casualty figures vary, but blame has to be allotted, writes Emma Daly

Sarajevo — "History starts now," said Admiral Leighton Smith, the Nato commander, shortly after the Dayton peace deal was signed in December. "We don't want to go back in time or dig up old wounds." In the months that followed, that reluctance to address the past has become a standard Western line. There is a sort of peace in Bosnia today, but those charged with implementing the peace frequently seem eager to draw a line under what came before.

In some respects, the news and images that have emerged from Bosnia have echoed Nazi Germany: the emaciated prisoners gazing through wire fences, the organised busings of Muslim prisoners to killing sites, the charges of genocide against members of the Bosnian Serb leadership.

But there is one big difference in the conflict that has produced the first war-crimes trials since Nuremberg. On this occasion, unlike in 1945, the winners are not trying the losers. This was a draw, imposed by international referees.

But, as Dayton can be read as the foundation of a united, multi-national Bosnia or as the acceptance of ethnic partition, the agreement has not answered the question that sparked the war: one country or two? (Or even three, if one factors in the Bosnian Croats).

The attitudes and policies that fuelled the conflict continue, an assessment, therefore, of the rights and wrongs of the war is necessary to aid the implementation of the peace.

British officials, in particular, have long been keen to fudge the issue: to present the Bosnian war as an internal conflict in which good and bad, right and wrong, have played no part. "They're all bastards," said one officer, reflecting the implied official sub-text.

It is notable, however, that most Western civilians working in Bosnia throughout the war, on both sides of the line, have concluded there is a significant difference between the government side and the separatist Serb leadership in Pale. (The Bosnian Croat leadership, sharing Pale's desire for union with a neighbour, shared many of its sins.)

"It's not black and white," said a diplomat involved in the negotiations. "They [the British] tried to make it all grey and it isn't — there are significant shades involved." The fact that the indictments issued by the war-crimes tribunal are disproportionately addressed to Serbs is testimony to the facts on the ground and the bodies below ground.

The Bosnian government claims 156,827 dead and missing in the war for their side and 175,286 wounded on its territory. It estimates 70,000 to 80,000 Serb dead. Pale does not release its figures. These totals



The body of a Muslim, killed trying to approach his former house, is carried away yesterday near Sjenina village, in a Serb-controlled area

are probably high; the foreign official estimated the figures to be around 60,000 government dead and perhaps 15,000 to 20,000 Serb dead.

When it comes to implementing the peace, the government side is undoubtedly guilty of many violations, of di-

plicitous tactics. "They're all liars," said another British officer. This may be true. But not all have practised genocide.

This is not to say either that Muslim soldiers did not kill civilians or harass minorities, nor to say that the Serb people are evil. But it is indisputable that the

Pale leadership openly sought to expel or exterminate all non-Serbs on its territory, and the Bosnian government, by contrast, sought to hold the country, and its people, together.

As one Serb, a former university lecturer (and no lover of the Bosnian government), not-

ed: "It's not the same. Really, that's a joke. It's not the same. The comparison between a fascist regime and one that wanted to be declared democratic is not a good one."

There are two principal views espoused by those who say "they're all the same". The first

is that the Bosnian government was restrained by opportunity, not by policy. But this does not appear to hold true. "If you take actual numbers of war crimes committed, the Serbs are the worst by a long way," said a foreign official with long experience in Bosnia. "If you adjust

the figures for opportunity, for example comparing villages taken by the Muslims ... you get a picture where the Serbs are still worse."

The second view is that the Bosnian government fooled us all by telling us what we wanted to hear — that all Bosnians should be able to live in one state, regardless of nationality. As it happens, that sentiment is more or less upheld by policy.

But even if Sarajevo is merely spouting off to keep us happy, one should perhaps be grateful that at least one side knows what the civilised, liberal view is. The Bosnian Serbs and many Croats are openly racist in their contempt and disgust for the Muslims, or "Turks", as they are known.

Unfortunately for those trying to implement the Dayton accord, the Pale leadership (which did not sign the plan but was forced into submission by President Slobodan Milosevic of Serbia) is clearly clinging to the old philosophy.

There are officials in the Serb entity who are working for a resolution, who see a future in a post-war Bosnia — but they are not in charge.

Dayton will only succeed in an atmosphere as free as possible of mutual recrimination, but drawing a diplomatic veil over the recent past will not change it. "Blame is for God and children," said one Nato spokesman. None the less, without any attempt to apportion blame, it may prove impossible to move towards a juster future. Only if we remember the way things were, can we help to shape the way things should be.

Abbé apologises in row over the Holocaust

MARY DEJEVSKY
Paris

Abbé Pierre, the French campaigner for the poor and the homeless, yesterday retracted statements supporting the revisionist historian Roger Garaudy, after an outcry from Jewish leaders, politicians and intellectuals.

Abbé Pierre, 83, said he "forcefully" condemned anyone who tried to "deny, falsify or play down the Holocaust".

The priest, better known for his extreme left-wing views, issued his statement after meeting the Chief Rabbi of France and the President of the Board of Deputies of French Jews.

The controversy erupted

when Abbé Pierre, who fought in the Resistance and helped Jews escape abroad, went into print to support of Garaudy's latest book, *The founding myths of Israeli politics*, which argues that the six million Jewish deaths in concentration camps is an exaggeration, used by Israel to foster a sense of nationhood. He claims many Jews

died in epidemics and bombings rather than in death-camps.

The abbé, a friend of Garaudy, told *Liberation* there should be a Holocaust debate, so that Jewish deaths could be placed in the context of the 700 or 30 million people the Nazis killed. He admitted, however, that he had only read a summary of the book.

Divers step up the search for ex-CIA chief

RUPERT CORNWELL
Washington

Search teams, divers and specially trained dogs scoured the Wicomico river in southern Maryland yesterday in a renewed attempt to find William Colby, the former CIA director who is believed to have died in a boating accident at the weekend.

Mr Colby, 76, who led the agency through some of its darkest hours under the White House reigns of Richard Nixon and Gerald Ford, went missing on Saturday evening.

He had taken to the waters in a canoe at his weekend home in the tiny community of Rock Point, where the Wicomico joins the Potomac river some 40 miles south of here.

All the signs point to him drowning, probably when his boat capsized in rough waters which were gusting at the time. The canoe has been recovered and searchers are now concentrating their efforts on Mr Colby's favourite routes, shown to them by his wife, Sally Shelton Colby, who was in Texas when the hunt for her husband began.

Alerted to his disappearance, neighbours found an unfinished meal and a glass of wine on the kitchen table of the yellow-painted home. A computer and other appliances were left on, suggesting that Mr Colby planned to return soon.

In a last phone call to his wife, on Saturday afternoon, he complained of feeling slightly unwell, but even so, enough peculiarities persist for police

not to exclude foul play.

As the agency's director between 1973 and 1976, Mr Colby made more than his share of enemies both outside and within its ranks. He laid bare agency secrets to congressional investigators probing alleged CIA wrongdoing — involving secret assassination plots abroad and illegal wire-tapping of journalists and others within the US — all in the impassioned atmosphere of the unfolding Watergate scandal.

With his insistence that a clean-up was the way forward, Mr Colby earned widespread dislike in the CIA's upper echelons as he violated the agency's unwritten code of silence and forced out several barons of its bureaucracy who operated their own entrenched fiefdoms, beyond the director's control.

For all the controversy which surrounded him, the former wartime agent never doubted he was doing the right thing. "He had the most difficult job of any CIA chief in history, and did it extremely well," his successor, Admiral Stansfield Turner, said earlier this week.

At Rock Point, Mr Colby lived a private, almost reclusive existence. The few residents who knew him said he was an excellent boatsman who would not take unwarranted risks with the weather. He invariably had a lifejacket with him.

Drowning was the presumed cause of death, said Fred Davis, the local county sheriff. "But we're not ruling out foul play — we never rule out foul play until we've found the body and performed an autopsy."

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she said. "When I realised that

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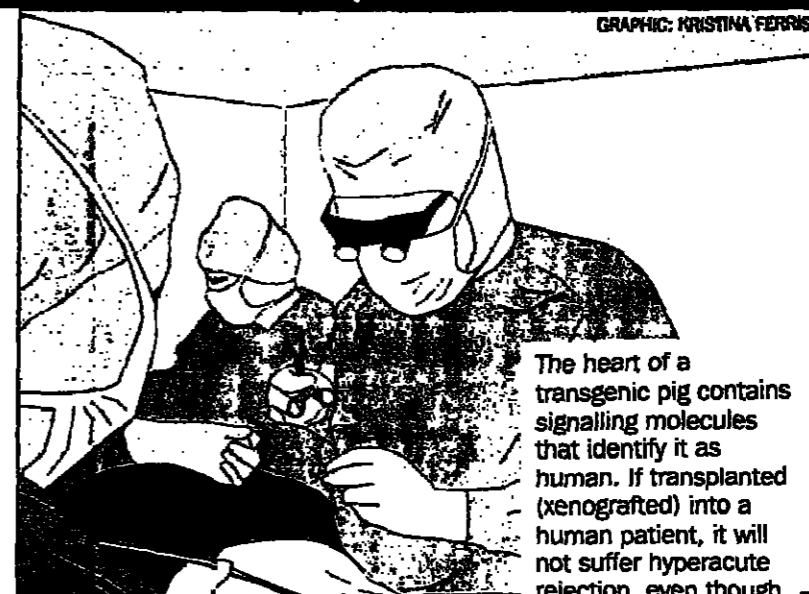
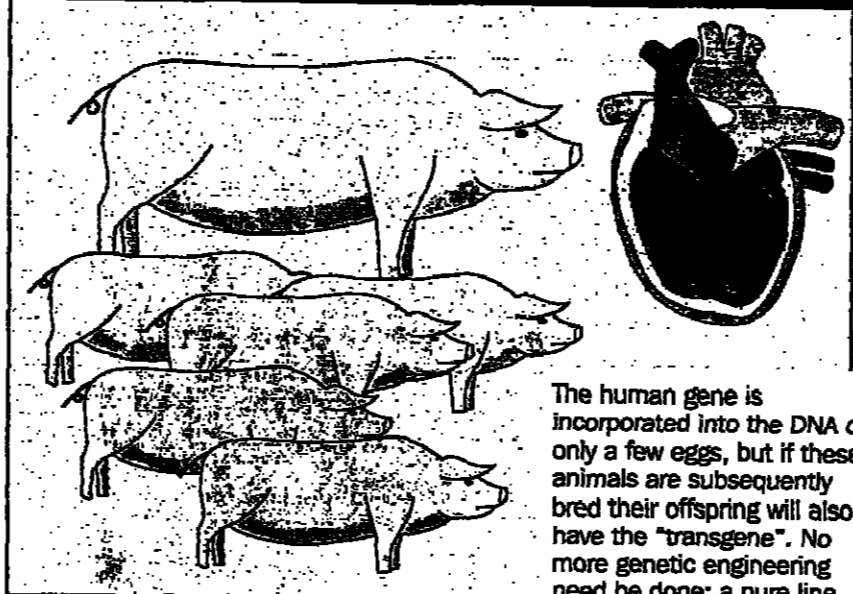
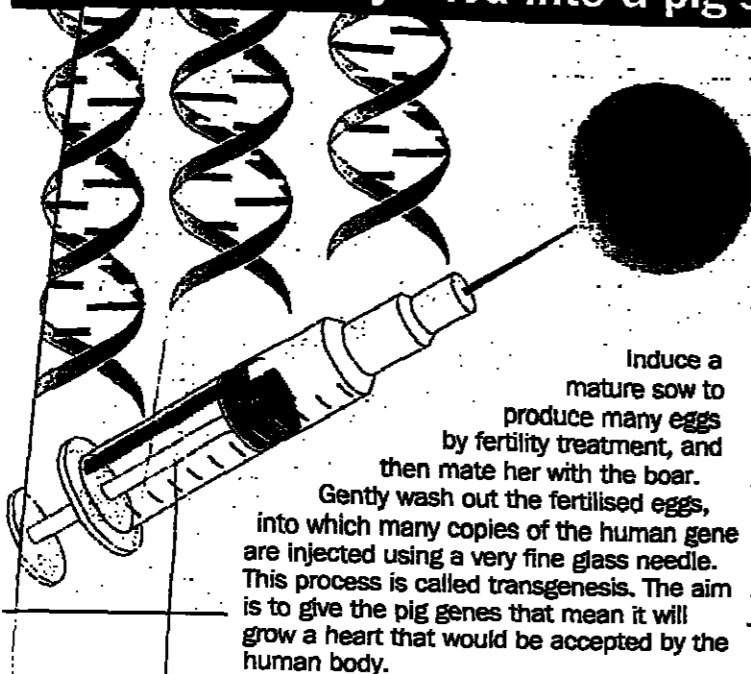
birth certificates and passports.

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she said.

كتاب من القرآن

Human genes injected into a pig's ovum ... can breed pigs with hearts that ... can be transplanted into humans



Could a pig save your life?

A doctor's group opposed to animal-human organ transplants was launched yesterday. Tom Wilkie examines a medical and moral controversy

What is "xenotransplantation"? Your kidneys are failing. If you are lucky and young you may have the option of dialysis. Another possibility might be to have the kidneys of a specially reared pig transplanted into your body. Which would you go for? This is xenotransplantation: the use of organs taken from an animal to treat a human with terminal disease. No one in Britain has been treated in this way, although it has been tried in the US.

Is human-organ transplantation worth it? Transplanting organs from human to human saves thousands of lives in Britain each year. The number of operations has risen and the outlook for the recipients has been getting better. It is not because surgeons have become better at stitching new organs into the body but because better drugs are available to suppress the immune system's attempt to reject the organ as "foreign". The first notable advance was the drug cyclosporin which became available at the start of the 1980s. But as the success rate improved, it opened the way for new demand for it and operation and that in turn created a chronic shortage of organs to transplant.

Transplants work? More than 70 per cent of recipients of human kidneys are still alive five years after a transplant. World-wide there are patients whose lives have been considerably extended by transplant: by 25 years after a liver transplant and 20 years after a heart transplant.

Are there alternatives to transplants? Kidney dialysis requires lengthy sessions of treatment each week and restrictions in diet and travel, yet it cannot prevent a general decline in health. Various devices are under development to help heart patients, but these are unlikely to

do better than supplement rather than replace the real thing.

Are transplants cost-effective? Transplants are cheap, compared to the alternatives. A kidney transplant costs about £10,000. The recipient has to take drugs thereafter to stop the immune system from rejecting the (human) transplant. This costs about £3,000 a year. Dialysis costs £18,000 a year in hospital and £11,000 a year at home.

Why is there a shortage of human organs? Frankly, because not enough young people are dying in road traffic accidents any more. Improved road safety has reduced the number of sudden deaths and thus of organs suitable for transplant. When we die of old age or disease, our organs are unlikely to be fit for transplantation.

So is there no way of increasing supply? Opinion polls show that 70 per cent of the

adult population are in favour of donating their organs but only 25 per cent carry a donor card. Close relatives turn down one out of every three requests by a doctor to remove organs for transplantation from someone who has just died. In Belgium and Singapore the law presumes that everyone is a donor unless they have registered their refusal to donate. But the Department of Health believes that such a law would be too intrusive in the UK.

Surely animal organs would not work? The human immune system rejects "foreign" tissues. If the transplant comes from a different species the reaction will be hyperacute and can destroy the organ in minutes. But the closer an animal is to humans on the evolutionary scale, then the less likely the human immune system is to have a hyperacute reaction to the grafted organ. So the ideal animal to supply organs to humans would be the chimpanzee, from which

humans differ by less than 2 per cent of our DNA. One American in 1964 survived for nine months with a chimpanzee's kidney, taking the immunosuppressive drugs necessary for human-to-human transplants.

Are chimpanzees an endangered species? Yes, so attention is switching to other animals. In the US, researchers are investigating baboons. In Britain, a company called Imutran is working with pigs. Imutran is genetically engineering the pigs so that the human immune system will be fooled into thinking that the pig's organ is human.

Is rejection the only risk? No. Animals may harbour viruses or bacteria which are harmless to the animal but which, transplanted into a human who is receiving drugs to suppress their immune system, might cause disease. The patient may then unwittingly infect other people - at the extreme, there is the risk of creating

a global pandemic. The risk of viruses jumping species is particularly high with animals which are close together on the evolutionary scale. Disease cross-over from one species to another is well known. The AIDS epidemic is believed to result from the transmission of a monkey virus into humans. Malaria, one of the most devastating diseases to afflict humanity, appears to have originated thousands of years ago as a cross-over from an infection in birds.

Can this risk be eliminated? Perhaps by ensuring that organs are taken from animals that have been raised under conditions that are so far as is practicable disease free. But baboons, like us, are social animals - if they had to be raised in isolation for quarantine purposes, it might be psychologically cruel. Unlike chimpanzees, baboons are not endangered in the wild although their habitat is under threat. They breed very slowly, with a female producing

one offspring every 15 months. Yet with a demand for 100,000 organ transplants a year in the US, the need to capture wild baboons to establish breeding colonies for transplantation could tip them into extinction.

So it's genetically engineered pigs for us? The risk of disease is smaller than with baboons. And we are accustomed to farming pigs for their meat, so moral objections to using them for organs are less acute. They breed faster, so demand for organs would be met more quickly.

Will organs from animals "work" in humans?

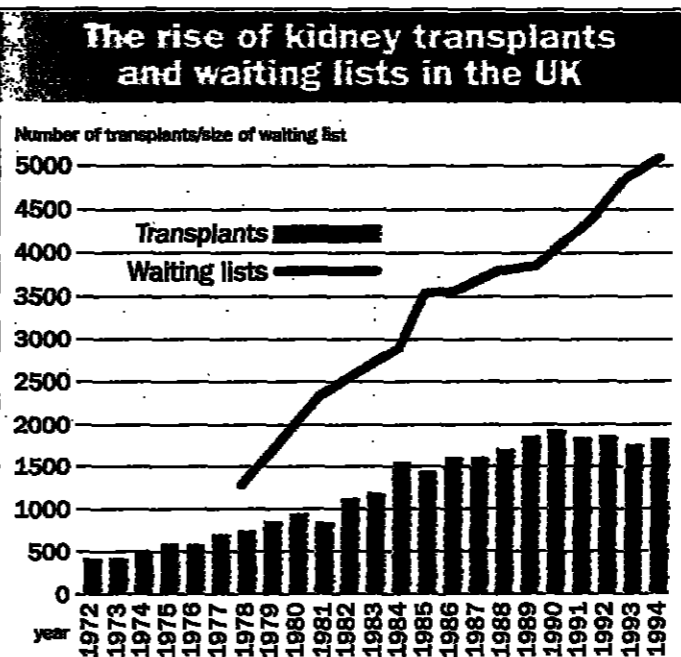
No one has yet proved that an animal's organ will grow and function properly within a human. A pig's heart might work - because the heart is basically a pump - whereas a liver or pancreas might not, because these organs carry out complex biochemical functions where slight differences may be very important. Pigs have another advantage: their organs are about the same size as a human's.

Who will decide whether these transplants should go ahead?

In March, the authoritative independent Nuffield Council on Bioethics published a meticulously researched but readable report on the ethics of xenotransplantation. The council ruled out the use of baboons and recommended strict controls, warning that for years to come any such transplants would be experiments with human beings, rather than treatment of proven efficacy. The Department of Health has an Advisory Group working on the issue too. Just last week, it organised a meeting of many of the country's leading experts to consider the risks of infectious diseases from xenografting. Its report in June should lay the basis for legislation. There is no specific legal prohibition against transplants but it is inconceivable that doctors would go ahead with such a treatment without legal safeguards.

'Animal to Human Transplants - the Ethics of Xenotransplantation' is available from the Nuffield Council on Bioethics, 28 Bedford Square, London WC1B 3EG, price £10.

A short history of animal transplants	
Primates	Other animals
All operations took place in the US	
1964 Six patients received chimpanzee kidneys. Most died within days. One survived nine months	1964 The first UK pig heart valve transplant took place. Now a routine operation
1964 Six patients received baboon kidneys. All died within two months	1968 Patient received sheep heart and died instantly
1984 Baby Fae received a baboon heart. She survived 20 days	1992 Patient received pig heart and survived less than 24 hours
1992 Patient received a baboon liver and survived 70 days	1994 Ten Swedish diabetic patients received pig foetal islet cells. In four patients, the pig cells survived for up to 14 months. Insulin produced at extremely low levels
1993 Patient received a baboon liver and survived 26 days	1995 Four Parkinson's patients received pig foetal neural tissue in the US
1995 Aids patient received a baboon bone marrow transplant in December. He left hospital in January 1996, at which point it was not known whether the transplant had been successful	



DIARY

First, find your gas showroom

Richard Giordano, the chairman of British Gas, received a terrible hammering yesterday's AGM, where one shareholder even criticised his £470,000 annual salary. "You are paid that just for a three-day week," he was reminded by Tony Augarde, a freelance writer from Oxford. "One trembles to think of the damage that might have been done if you had been working full-time."

Our own investigations, however, show that British Gas has a secret and potentially highly effective strategy to tackle the problem of customer complaints, which have doubled since last year. Brian Simpson, of north London, tells us of his intrepid struggles to buy a cooker from British Gas. He was first obstructed by their shop closure programme; then, when he finally tracked down one of the last surviving showrooms in London (its address and number were apparently ex-directory), he was further frustrated, first by an assistant who denied knowledge of the cooker model that British Gas had been advertising the previous day ("They never tell us anything," was his helpful line), and then by workmen who told him he couldn't have a cooker in the space available, even though one had been happily operating there for half a century. The final advice from the showroom was: "I'd get an electrician if I were you." That'll cut the complaints.

On Wembley's green and pleasant turf

Connoisseurs of doggerel would be foolish to miss *Over the Moon*, a collection of "championship football poems" from Random House Children's Books to be published tomorrow. That's poems about championship football, in case you're wondering, not championship poems about football. Here's a sample, to be sung to the tune of "Jerusalem":
And as those feet, in flaming June,
Walked on Wembley's hallowed green?

Brian Simpson plays a welcoming tune to host encounters European. And did they qualify, the cream of Scotland, Spain and Germany? Did Jackie Charlton's boys make the team? To meet England or Italy?

That was from the bardic pen of Jimmy Hill (right) and may help to explain why the Church of Scotland has decided that "Jerusalem" is unsuitable for its hymnals. Well, they say William Blake couldn't score with an open goal-mouth in front of him.



Where's the beer? Jimmy Hill's new book only wants to be polite.

Like a bat out of hell, if that's OK with you
Marvin Lee Aday, better known as Meat Loaf, the truly talented, sweetly larger than life singer-songwriter, is not all he seems. In an interview with *New Music Express* the 42-year-old American singer reveals not only that he is unlikely to sing to drink in his old age - "He's a teetotaler" - but he has an impeccable manner to boot. "I don't think of myself as just a singer," he said. "I feel blessed and I thank the audience every night. Hey, it's my job." He is also unlikely to catch AIDS. Yes, the singer is notoriously known as "Meat" by friends and family, a gentle smiley vegetarian. According to a legend, he acquired his sobriquet in his impetuous youth after winning a bet as "Meat" by friends and family to let a friend run over his head with a car. A teenager potentially suicidal? Not to let a friend run over his head with a car. A teenager potentially suicidal? Not to let a friend run over his head with a car. A teenager potentially suicidal? Not to let a friend run over his head with a car.

Fancy a top-up? Soon it will even be legal

There's good news today, something to bring joy to all publicans and their clientele. For the Government, in its efforts to cut back on red tape, is repealing a law that no one knew existed in the first place. Section 165 of the Licensing Act 1964, better known as the "Long Puff" prohibition, is confidently expected to be repealed today in the Lords as part of the Deregulation Bill.

For those not familiar with the 1964 Act, there is a section that makes it an offence to sell or supply to a person a measure of intoxicating liquor that is more than the amount for which he asks. In other words, until today, it has been illegal for a publican to top up a pint.

The honorary secretary of the Parliamentary Beer Club, Robert Humphreys, was bemused. "The law was presumably passed to discourage publicans from attracting more business by giving extra. I've heard of people complaining about a short measure, but to be prosecuted for a long measure is bizarre."

A thoroughly positive piece of legislation? "I'll drink to that," was his reply.

You're never old when you're a New Avenger

It's one of those far from absolutely fabulous moments in life when one's Eagle-eyes begin to wonder if it's time for spectacles, and one's feathers feel tattered. Was it really so long ago that we frittered away our youth drooling over the "New Avengers"? Joanna Lumley is 50 today. Happy birthday, Purdy.

Scunthorpe censored

Residents of Humberside: one of your towns has been officially renamed. From now on, it's Scunthorpe. According to America Online, anyway. The world's largest Internet server has been having a little problem with its fifth-detecting censorship software, with the result that anyone attempting to subscribe from an address in Scunthorpe has the modem slammed down on them in a fit of prudery when they get halfway through the town's name. Would-be customers have been told that subscriptions from Scunthorpe would present no problem. As Mary Whitehouse batters have always pointed out, if you're looking hard enough for four-letter words, you'll find them everywhere.

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THE INDEPENDENT

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Giving peace one last chance

Peace in Northern Ireland seems to be slipping through our fingers. All-party peace talks are due to start on 10 June. Yet without Sinn Féin present they will take place beneath a very large question mark: what is the point? Even in Dublin, apparently the place where enthusiasm for the talks is greatest, the private word in the foreign ministry is that the talks are "not worth a penny candle". Peace will only last in Northern Ireland if it is legitimate and it can only be legitimate if the terrorists and their political sympathisers can be drawn into mainstream politics.

But the chances of Sinn Féin sitting at the negotiating table on 10 June look increasingly slim. The Irish Prime Minister, John Bruton, cut a lonely figure this week with his expressions of "mild optimism" about a possible restoration of the IRA ceasefire before talks begin. Yet as long as the bombers keep bombing, their political counterparts must be excluded from talks.

That the peace process should be so completely scuppered seems outrageous. The population of Northern Ireland are enjoying their respite from violence, however temporary it might turn out to be. Most people want peace and know that the only way to achieve it is to get everyone round a table large enough to have every issue put upon it. So much progress seems to have been made over the past 18 months and surely there should be something more that someone could do to rescue the process before it collapses altogether?

The straightforward answer of course is that the IRA should abandon its violence again. Mr Bruton bases his optimism on "the logic of the situation", arguing that sooner or later the republican movement will realise what an unprecedented opportunity awaits them. If we are lucky, he will be proved right. Unfortunately it seems more likely that Sinn Féin and the IRA do not believe this is an opportunity worth taking. Could it be that with a little more reassurance that the talks are "for real", Sinn Féin might persuade the IRA it was worth reinstating the ceasefire?

This is clearly what the Irish government has been trying in the past few weeks. On Monday, the Irish Foreign Minister, Dick Spring, proposed that the decommissioning of weapons should be discussed in parallel with other negotiations - to stop the entire process being derailed on the first day. Spring's suggestions are worth considering, and the Ulster Unionists - and many Tory MPs - were foolish and irresponsible to denounce them so completely yesterday. It is naïve to think that paramilitaries will abandon their weapons before discussing the issues that provoked them to arms in the first place. To insist that agreement on arms is the precursor to further talks is to paralyse the talks altogether.

How should John Major respond to all this? So far, the British Prime Minister has played an admirable role in the peace process. However, while his personal commitment to the Northern Ireland peace process remains unquestioned, his government, his party, and his straitened political circumstances are letting him down.

The biggest problem for Mr Major now is that no matter how fair and balanced he tries to be, the nationalists will always believe he is in lock with the Unionists at Westminster to keep his government afloat. The revival of a peace process that has run so deeply into the sand requires energy, focus and authority; qualities that Mr Major's tired and distracted government lacks.

But holding out for the election of a Labour government or a revival in Mr Major's fortunes will be little consolation to the people of Northern Ireland. So in the meantime, the two governments, politicians and paramilitaries on all sides must not give up the pursuit of peace. The talks on 10 June may be slow going, incomplete and inconclusive - but at least they are talks. While there is still a chance, however slim, Major should attend them. If he decides not to it will surely sound the death-knell for this stage in the peace process.

Rhyme and reason

Quod spiro et placeo tuum est, said Horace - "it is because of you I make poetry". For poets down the ages "you" more often than not was she: Catullus's Lesbia, Burns's Bonnie Lesley, Goethe's Lottie, Betjeman's Joan Hunter Dunn. Traditionally, poets have sought inspiration outside themselves. They bend a figure from nature, from a brook, from a face. They hear a rhyme in a clock (Pope) or a step (Baudelaire).

According to Dr Felix Post, writing in the *British Journal of Psychiatry*, this is how poets work. They are, it appears, more sociable and less self-preoccupied than other artists. According to his (not entirely rigorous or scientific) study of poets' characters, they are much less "antisocial, histrionic and narcissistic" not just than writers of prose and plays but even than the population at large. So perhaps they do, like Donne contemplating heaven - or his mistress's bum - get their inspiration from without.

Yet that is not the end of the story. Poets, Dr Post opines, exhibit much higher levels of severe manic depression than other kinds of writer. But they show lower levels of mild depression, alcoholism, sexual dysfunction and what the psychiatrists charmingly call personality deviations. Dr Post's consulting couch throws up the following explanation. Writers of novels or plays, Dr Post's study, it should be said, is of the greats

rather than authors from the Jilly Cooper and Jeffrey Archer school - enter into the heads of their characters and this leads to greater "inner turmoil". Poets, by contrast, are connoisseurs of language rather than character. It seems the pursuit of a metaphor is less stressful than working out a plot.

But this is all counter-intuitive. Don't poets inhabit garrets along with the cast of Bohemian life, or live the romantic life of *l'ourance* with Cavafy or Rilke? The fact is generalisation across the writing disciplines is fraught with difficulty. As for Dr Post's suggestion that poets don't drink or screw around: didn't Dylan Thomas write that book aided and abetted by Dryden and Jonson? For every Sylvia Plath the world of verse can offer upstanding characters like Tennyson; for every drug-abusing Coleridge a clean-living fellow such as Walt Whitman; for every brash young Shelley a wise old Homer.

Dr Post speculates that creative work of the imagination is associated with "excessively" high activity in the neural networks but is not entirely sure which way the causation runs. That sounds suspiciously like a very old observation about artists of all kinds. They are all slightly unbalanced, slightly manic. That is what makes them strive to see themselves, us and the world more clearly than we do.



Albert Hall ghost goes into politics

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Save 'Jerusalem' from small-minded clerics

Sir: Drop "Jerusalem" from the Church of Scotland's hymn book, or how to make yourself look silly in one simple step. And all because "Ancient hymns falls the modern test", 29 April "no one knows what it means".

No one knows what a considerable proportion of Scotsmen are saying, with their weird dialects, but I'm not aware that the Government intends to send them all back to Scotland. And the Rev Charles Robertson wants to exclude "God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen" because the word "gentlemen" breaches political correctness.

What then of the salutation "Ladies and gentlemen"? Would this clergyman have us say "Dearly beloved"? Surely the remedy is to have a section for "traditional melodies" in the Scottish hymnal? I do not quite know what it is

that is so offensive about the Rev Robertson's plans. It offends against something innate in me - a sense of history perhaps. Perhaps it is a sense of tradition, of continuity. All I can say is that if he carries his plans through, he is likely to be neither dear nor beloved by many of his congregations and make himself look small-minded, not to say idiotic, into the bargain.

Lord BROADBRIDGE
House of Lords
London SW1

Sir: So most people do not know what the words of the hymn "Jerusalem" mean. The tradition that the young Jesus Christ visited these islands with his uncle Joseph of Arimathea, to which the hymn refers, may or may not be true. Credence must be given it, however, in view of the fulfilled

promise to the patriarch Jacob that his descendants would become "a nation and a company of nations" (Genesis 35 x, xi), which promise was subsequently passed specifically to the descendants of his son Joseph.

The existence of the British Commonwealth, over which an ancient throne rules on which the monarchs are crowned on "the pillar stone of Jacob" or "Stone of Scone" - see Genesis 35 again - should make people think about this hymn and its meaning.

Mrs S PEARSON
Beckenham, Kent

Sir: Perhaps political correctness and spoon-feeding haven't quite gone far enough. Surely "hymn", "hymnal", "hymnary" sound far too masculine to be retained?

MICHAEL T HYDE
London N5

Public support for Comic Relief

Sir: Peter Popham (29 April) claims that Comic Relief is inefficient - "Oxfam raises four times more per year than Comic Relief's £10m" - and that it "stagnates on", raising less and less each year. The sum raised last year is actually £20.8m, not £10m. This represents an increase in income of 20 per cent from the previous event and both Oxfam and Save the Children Fund have, over the years, been the principal beneficiaries of funds raised by Comic Relief itself.

Under the Popham treatise, British giving remains "a peculiarly compulsive activity", undertaken in a "completely disinterested way, to whatever at any particular moment wrings our heartstrings the hardest". Indeed, giving is "one of the last unconscious hangovers from the glorious days of our empire".

But latest figures detailing income to the top 500 charities reveal that 33 per cent of total income comes from that most

compulsive, immediate and disinterested of sources - the charitable bequest or legacy.

Who, or what, were the great fundraisers of the British Empire? Not Oxfam. Save the Children, nor the vast majority of public fundraising charities, all of which are a more modern phenomenon.

It is the advent of modern technology, and events like Comic Relief which harness that technology to the fundraising process, that have allowed a broader public the opportunity to support the causes they wish to.

STEPHEN LEE
Director
Institute of Charity
Fundraising Managers
London SW8

Sir: Scrooge didn't need Christmas but that didn't dampen the Cratchitts' spirits. Bah, humbug to Peter Popham!

JULIA LOCKWOOD
London N22

Post letters to Letters to the Editor, and include a daytime telephone number. (Fax: 0171-293 2056; e-mail: letters@independent.co.uk) Letters may be edited for length and clarity.

Caxton outlives the computer

Sir: Not another obituary for the book "Have we reached the end of the book?", 27 April. John Walsh's article and Sven Birkerts' book *The Gutenberg Elegies*, to which he refers, must have consumed acres of paper and gallons of ink. We have been here before. The "paperless" office is now groaning under a mountain of computer print-out.

In the late 1980s I studied computing. The disks were five and a half inches in diameter, and I used them to store my work. Later, I have returned to these computer classes, and of course technology has moved on, with the now standard three-and-a-half-inch disk. I have lost access to my work in the larger format disks. With formats continually changing we would need a science museum of computer antiques to preserve our knowledge.

A couple of years ago I visited the British Library and saw William Tyndale's Bible, which changed the direction of Christianity and the English language. As I peered into the glass case, I could read those beautiful words with little difficulty. There will be no end to technological change, but when our descendants are salvaging scrambled disks or whatever has replaced them, the works of Gutenberg, Caxton and Birkerts will still be available for instant consultation.

PETER STOCKILL
Middlesbrough

Ritual slaughter by Christians

Sir: Muslims are not the only Europeans who slit the throats of lambs for religious festivals ("British sheep sent to horrific killing ground", 29 April). Many more are slaughtered this way for Greek Easter. Where are the horror stories then?

For an RSPCA inspector to say that "the lack of bleating is indicative of suffering" is ludicrously anthropomorphic. I have helped to kill neighbours' sheep in Greece. It is painless and humane. The animal does not struggle. It drifts off as if under an anaesthetic. The rest of the flock graze happily a few feet away.

This is not the point. What sends shivers down spines is the word Muslim. Your article was more about racism than animal welfare.

JOHN MOLE
London SE24

Militant feminists in the law

Sir: Eileen Pembroke's tirade against me ("My daft learned friend: shut up!", 22 April) represents a ludicrously inaccurate version of the speech I delivered at the Women Lawyers' Conference. The central theme of the speech was that in recent years women have made very considerable progress in the profession and that it was strange that this progress received so little celebration from militant feminists of Mrs Pembroke's type. The militants feed on grievances, not achievements.

I have never said that "sexual harassment did not occur in the legal profession", merely that the issue was greatly exaggerated by the militants. Mrs Pembroke is well aware that the female head of personnel at the Law Society has stated, in writing, that she does not consider that sexual harassment is a problem at the Law Society. But that is one of those things which is simply not allowed to be said.

I have never said that "women should be at home tending their families, not elbowing their way to the top". I have said that some women willingly choose to give family priority over career and that this is a choice they are entitled to make.

MARTIN MEAS
President
The Law Society
London WC

Lesson of yet another gun massacre

Sir: Will the latest gun atrocity, in Tasmania, help to focus the Government's mind on its brave words and fine promises to the people of Dunblane?

When the "gun amnesty" starts in June, 12 weeks will have elapsed since that atrocity. Guns handed in under this amnesty are weapons held illegally, but both Hungerford and Dunblane were perpetrated by "licensed" killers, so that nothing will have removed the possibility of a third massacre. Draconian measures are called for, so when will this government, nay, this Parliament

Mrs Pembroke says that I "do not like women as piers and colleagues". This is ridiculous. During the Law Society Council elections last year I voted for a woman for the office of Deputy Vice-President and gave my supporters to do to same. Women are disproportionately represented in my own Council support group. I was member of the committee that recently (and unanimously) appointed the Law Society's first female Secretary-General.

The statement that have described women as "the enemy", is equally preposterous. I was criticising the zeals, an entirely different thing.

Mrs Pembroke and I fight an election campaign less than 12 months ago. We both addressed meetings, published articles and manifestos. The professional every chance to make its own assessment. In the event, I was elected with Mrs Pembroke taking third. Throughout the campaign she banged the feminist drum but made no more impression on women solicitors than men.

MARTIN MEAS
President
The Law Society
London WC

Diplomatic silence over Chechnya

Sir: In his moving plea ("Halt the fall into barbarity", 29 April) for the international community to take action to stem the slide into barbarism in Chechnya, Jean-Marc Borne of the International Committee of the Red Cross asks whether the diplomatic silence would have been so deafening had this appalling war broken out in the days of the Soviet Union.

The short answer, of course, is no. Western politicians would have shed crocodile tears at the spectacle of the plucky Chechens struggling to cast off the yoke of the "evil empire", while the CIA would have been equipping them with Stinger missiles.

But now that Russia has joined the "Free World", the US Secretary of Defense, William Perry, categorises Russian policy in Chechnya, which has resulted in the indiscriminate mass slaughter of civilians, as "entirely correct".

At the recent G7 meeting in Moscow, President Clinton, displaying as great an ignorance of his own history as that of Chechnya, likened the conflict to the American Civil War.

If the war in Chechnya resembles anything in US history, it is the genocidal Indian wars of the 19th century.

Professor RICHARD CLOGG
European Studies Centre
St Antony's College
Oxford

A corpse is not a person

Sir: Burying human remains in several places ("Priests puzzle over double burial", 26 April) is only a problem if a corpse is regarded as a person. After death what remains has served its purpose, like milk teeth and hair clippings. These will not be used for a future life but may be treasured mementoes of the past.

If a mourner finds it helpful to have a portion of her loved one's remains nearby, that should be respected.

People come to terms with death in different ways. For myself, the whereabouts of relatives' material remains is a matter of indifference. The person's future is with God.

Rev Canon JOHN GOODCHILD
Liverpool

Every Tory for himself

Sir: Your report (29 April) on the possibility of 100 Conservative MPs defying the leadership on Europe quotes David Evans MP as saying: "We're heading for a situation where it's every man for himself."

How apt. This is precisely what the Conservatives have espoused for the rest of us for the past 17 years.

The Rev STEPHEN JONES
Canford, Dorset

Pottering about with 'Thought for the Day'

The reason why "Thought for the Day" on Radio 4's *Today* programme is going through such turmoil is quite simple. Just before he died, Dennis Potter signed up a deal with the BBC whereby they would agree to use his posthumous scripts for "Thought for the Day". It meant firing all the regulars and completely clearing the decks, but now everything is sorted out and ready to roll.

The first Dennis Potter "Thought for the Day" went out this morning. In case you missed it, here is the whole historic text.

"Thought for the Day": part one of a new radio play by Dennis Potter. The scene is a radio studio. The Bishop of Rutland is seated before a microphone. He has a bottle of whisky in front of him. He sips from a glass. We hear Fred Astaire singing "Night and Day". It fades away.

Bishop: Mmm. Scotch. Nice. Warm the cockles of your... cockles of your things. Heart. Warm the cockles of your heart.

He takes another sip. Funny word, cockles. Cockles and mussels. Strange place to find cockles, in your heart. Mussels of your heart. Strange...



MILES KINGSTON

Voiceover: Going live in 20 seconds, bishop.

Bishop: What do you mean? I'm live now, aren't I?

Presenter's voice: And now it's time for "Thought for the Day", which comes today from our Leicester studio, where the Bishop of Rutland is waiting for us. Bishop?

Bishop: Thank you, James, and good morning everybody. Today I want to say something about hearing voices. You know, we often talk about hearing voices, but how often do we actually hear voices out of the air? I mean actually hear disembodied voices out of thin air? Like St Joan of Arc did? Well, in my case, quite often. For instance, I am sitting in a radio studio at this very moment and from time to time I hear Fred Astaire singing. Or voices saying, "Going on air in 10 minutes" or "Could you speak a little more clearly, Bishop, without the

slurring?" and these voices seem to have no human source at all. I'll give you another example. I was at a party the other day...

We move to a party scene. Lots of chatter and tinkling and laughter. Bishop: I was just standing by myself when from nowhere a voice spoke. Voice: Hi, Bish! What's your poison? Bishop: How very true, I thought. Drink is our poison, isn't it? The words "toxic" and "intoxicant" are so very closely allied. And I looked round to see who had said this, and there was a man who introduced himself as a doctor.

Doctor: Hi, Bish. Have you noticed that at every party you go to there's always one person who confesses to being a doctor? And another 10 who don't? Because if you admit at a party that you're a doctor, then someone is bound to start presenting their symptoms to you. So we take it in turns. And I'm the doctor on call at this party.

Bishop: Funny you should say that. I've been hearing voices recently. I have also been slurring my speech a lot. And I've been knocking things over. I wonder if there is any disease which causes all those things, when you haven't been drinking at all.

Doctor: You haven't been drinking at all?

Bishop: Oh, no, I've been drinking a lot. I just need a disease which produces the same symptoms, so I can use it as an alibi.

Doctor: Senile dementia would fit the bill. Bishop: Senile dementia! Excellent! Thanks, doc!

The scene changes to a rainy street. We hear the Bishop addressing a pair of young girls.

Bishop: Hello, girls. Like to hear my thought for the day?

First girl: You're pissed!

Second girl: You're disgusting!

Bishop: You may be right. But at least I hear voices, which is more than you do. And I'm not pissed. I've got an illness called... hold on, I've got it written down somewhere.

Sound of a fall. First girl: Oh my God, he's collapsed. Second girl: It happened to my Uncle Jack just like that. One minute he was shopping in Woolworth's - that was his job - the next minute he was down with a stroke. They found 40 packets of jelly babies on him. The coroner said it was a miracle.

This extremely confusing episode is being repeated on commercial radio tomorrow. There will be another 149 episodes on Radio 4, all more or less the same.

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she said. "When I realised that" tors breached the 1976 Euro- have to amend legislation. birth certificates and passports. missioning IRA weapons. said one ministerial source.

مكتبة الصالح

comment

The age of innocence is dead, killed by suspicion

This story marks another nail in the coffin of the age of innocence – for nothing could be more innocent than the Children's Country Holiday Fund. Founded in 1884 by Canon Samuel Barnett and his wife Dame Henrietta, it has sent more than a million children from "the London slums" on country holidays.

But this venerable charity (President, Princess Alexandra) is now in deep disarray, wracked by self-doubt and anxiety. Yesterday its director resigned and the trustees have closed down all the holidays for this year. The 3,000 poor children expecting to go will be sadly disappointed. The hundreds of volunteers who organise the holidays each year, mainly with country families, have wasted their time and work.

The charity has fallen victim to a panic about child abuse gripping many organisations. It is not, after all, a panic without substance. Following the horrible revelations reported extensively in this paper from Clwyd, and other dreadful cases in children's homes, the world has finally woken up to the devils of predatory paedophiles who infiltrate every place where children are to be found.

Child abuse fears are about to cost many needy children a holiday. Are we being over-cautious?

What has befallen the CCHF is a sad warning of what may happen to a number of other excellent voluntary organisations. Those country families that out of generosity have taken in children from London for years may feel themselves suddenly subject to unjust suspicion. Decent, selfless people may become increasingly fearful of involving themselves with children at all.

The trouble started last summer in a CCHF camp (though most holidays are with host families in the country). An Islington child at a CCHF camp complained of what Islington describes as "inappropriate touching" by a camp organiser. Although the incident was relatively minor, it led to police investigation of the accused man. A teacher in residential schools, he is now in custody on charges relating to his teaching work. Unfortunately, he was one of the 15 trustees of the charity. Two other trustees have resigned in the past two years following convictions for child abuse, unconnected with CCHF children. One got three years' probation, the other spent four months in prison. In another

incident two years ago, a London volunteer used the CCHF to befriend a vulnerable family, earning their trust, then offering to babysit and take the children swimming. He served a three-month sentence for molesting one of them.

Put together in this way, that sounds like quite a long list of disaster for the CCHF. Three trustees and one volunteer turn out to have been accused of paedophilia. On the other hand, Bob McKewen, the director, says that in all these years there have only ever been these two relatively minor incidents with CCHF children. Many of the volunteers accuse him of panicking unduly, sacrificing children's holidays needlessly. This tension has partly led to his resignation. He is an ex-army man and he thinks the job should go to a child-care professional.

Islington Council, hyper-sensitive to child abuse after serious cases in their own children's homes, told the CCHF that because these two incidents both happened to their children, they would no longer send any others. They said they would write to every other London borough



POLLY TYNBEES

Decent people may become too fearful of working with children

telling them of their concern, as social services always share any cause for alarm. The letters went out yesterday. The CCHF replied that to avoid scandal they would close down all their holidays this year and review their methods.

Many of the volunteers within CCHF are distraught at the loss of all this year's holidays. They feel their procedures are as water-tight as possible. Host families are vetted

by local volunteers. If they are deemed suitable, they then have to provide legal proof of identity. (Paedophiles frequently change name and address to avoid detection). They need two references, one from their GP and one from another professional person. Then they need to be cleared with the local social services department, and after that they are cleared with police records through a special department of the Home Office. This is a pretty rigorous system. What more can the CCHF be expected to do? The Scout Association, for instance, has no access to police records but relies on its own cuttings and records of anyone ever reported to them or the press on child abuse charges. However, they say they only get some 10 complaints of any sort each year against their 110,000 leaders.

Following the Cytod revelations the Government is considering a national register of convicted paedophiles. But, many of the professionals say, it would be important to include allegations (whether substantiated or not) as well as convictions, to detect recurrent patterns.

The CCHF will now bring in more thorough interviewing, though most people agree that the chances of detecting a paedophile on interview are virtually nil. Islington's deputy head of social services, Paul Fallon, says they have been looking into character tests (so-called "personality inventories") although they are not convinced that these have been proved to work. But he does think vigorous screening may deter paedophiles from applying, and they will move off to a safer target.

The National Children's Bureau is helping CCHF to improve its methods. One suggestion is that children and families should be told clearly how to make complaints, and blow the whistle on anything suspicious.

John Rea Price, a former Social Services director and now head of the National Children's Bureau, has had a life-time's experience of all this. He used to be sceptical of rumours of paedophile rings, but has learned of their sophistication through bitter experience. He cites the recent case of a one-time employee of the Children's Bureau who later became a leading child abuse consultant. Open

University lecturer and author of key texts on residential care. A lifetime of paedophilia was uncovered only by a chance customs discovery of child pornography.

"There is no justice in these cases," Mr Rea Price says. "The media damn you if you do take rigorous action and then damn you if you don't. The CCHF are right to close down for a time, because it's God's law something will happen if they don't. But it will be an absolute tragedy if that spirit of volunteering, generosity and hospitality is lost, that spontaneous human kindness to children. After all, volunteers usually have a better record of safety with children than professionals."

Many of the volunteers think the CCHF has over-reacted. Temporary closure is a gesture with little real substance. Rigorous new checks may yield no better results, while making it virtually impossible for the country volunteers to operate. So the charity may collapse because nothing they can do will ever be 100 per cent risk free. But it would be a bitter loss to children who need a holiday from families that have neglected or abused them – and a sad loss of the volunteering spirit, of simple goodness and kindness.

Blair's voters in Versace

Essex man and woman are in the money, yet the feel-good factor is leading them to choose Labour

Via, no kidding, a satellite link from Basildon, Tony Blair delivered a blatant lie to a Westminster press conference. "Basildon," he said, "is an interesting place." Admittedly he then went on to say, "in which to hold a local election campaign". But the damage was done. Basildon of itself is not an interesting place and has only taken on the ephemeral raiments of fascination by being one jill part of that legendary county which is the home of Essex Man.

And here was Blair's point. "Essex man and Essex woman," he insisted, "are coming over to today's Labour Party." The electoral resonance of this arises from the fact that it was the result at Basildon – a 1,480 majority for Tony David Amess – that signalled the defeat of Labour last time round. Apparently Essex Man, whatever his working-class roots, had seen the free market, Euro-sceptic light.

The point was that this man was not a natural Tory, he was not from old, rural Essex, but from new, suburban Essex. He sprang from working-class Labour roots. So the deeper significance claimed for that victory was that an irreversible cultural and demographic change had taken place. Former Labour supporters had been, if not quite gentrified, then at least drawn into the enterprise culture. They took the threat of high taxes personally and they regarded Labour's manifesto as an invitation back to the bad old days of unions and a fixed, underdog place in the world.



BRYAN APPELEYARD

Such a convert became known to Tory canvassers during the 1987 election not as Essex Man but Earring Man. He would answer the door dressed in jeans and designer T-shirt, with severely cropped hair and a ring in one ear. This ring came to inspire neither fear nor an inward groan in the canvassers, but rather a sigh of relief. For they knew that it signified a self-made man, perhaps with a small business, who had done well under Maggie and expected to continue to do well under Major. He was the new True Blue, not the old Skinhead Red.

"There was usually a Rotweiler in the background," one canvasser told me, "and its owner often had a domineering mother, so he went for Maggie."

If Blair is right and Earring Man is about to vote Labour, then it will indeed be a personal triumph for him and for his new, non-socialist, enterprise-friendly party. In fact, it will turn out to be an even bigger triumph than he realises. For Blair will have overturned not just the mythology of Essex, but also the old, apparently iron-clad law of British politics that rich people vote Tory and poor people vote

Labour. This is because the current truth about Earring Man, at least those who live in Essex, is that they are, possibly unknown to the Treasury, stinking rich.

The exact extent of this wealth will not emerge in official figures for some time. Perhaps it will never emerge. This, I suspect, because the casual, or black, economy in this country has boomed. One indicator is that VAT and tax receipts are lower than they should be. But the dead giveaway is that the official figures show only modest growth and still cautious consumers. The reality on the ground is that a boom is in progress.

My primary evidence comes from the vast Lakeside Shopping Centre in Thurrock in, naturally, Essex. This is, for the moment, a sociologist's paradise. The kind wealth on display is extraordinary. Versace jeans are the key. These cost around £120 and are either being worn by or sold to Lakeside customers in bewildering numbers. They are *de rigueur* for Earring Man and his mate. And then there are sunglasses. One shop's range starts with Ray-Bans at £80 plus and rises to Jean-Paul Gaultier's at £250 plus. None of these things is presented as a luxury item, rather they are the only items in certain shops. If the middle classes are still too insecure to move house, then the lower middle classes are secure enough to become label victims.

And perhaps that is the point. Previous booms have been defined primarily as middle-



Trying Labour on for size? Shoppers at Lakeside mall in Thurrock, home of conspicuous consumption for 'Earring Man'

Photograph: Jane Baker

class phenomena, based overwhelmingly on house prices. When the middle class feels rich it invests in property and then feels even richer as house prices rise to silly levels. But this is a liquid boom fuelled by a consumption rather than investment culture and, I would guess, by previous experience of insecurity. The working and lower middle classes have pulled out of the property dream. The house price crash detonated that myth and undermined the glamour of the council house sales programme of the Eighties. Now when Earring Man feels rich he goes for the Gaultier and Versace – conveniently or, perhaps, deliberately these are both designers whose products – spattered with gilt – go perfectly with the metallic macho of the car.

This is not the sort of wealth the Tories find easy to deal with.

Thatcher's property owning democracy was all about stabilising people in their homes, making them thrifty and solid – in fact, lots of little Grantham housewives and their husbands. But the new Earring wealth has mobile, globalised tastes and more insubstantial goals. Earring Man likes money, certainly, but not as much as he likes to spend it. Tory thrift has gone wrong for the property-obsessed middle class; they have discovered insecurity. But the lower classes have always known insecurity and they discovered it anew after the council house buying aberration of the Eighties. Now they've got it again, they're spending it.

So the question raised by Blair's remarks is can Earring Man possibly vote Labour? To veterans of the 1987 election in particular it may seem inconceivable. During that campaign

it became clear that voting Tory was a fundamental act of Earring self-identification, an assertion of aspiration, of material ambition. On the other hand Earring Man is hard, he does not like weakness and Major is definitely weak. Blair may not obviously be strong but, as one Tory put it, he "comes across as a gent" so he may still satisfy the aspirational Earring.

If he does, then the stakes are high. Essex is solidly Tory with the exception of, conveniently enough, Thurrock, home of the Lakeside mall. Converts here would be true converts, people who had made an imaginative leap from one identity to another. Blair would have convinced them that Labour no longer stank of pig-headed unions and dismal comprehensives, but rather gave off the fragrance of modernity, of Parfums Versace. Basildon will certainly

go Labour, but then there might also be Harlow or, almost unthinkably, Braintree.

But Essex, as a whole isn't really the point, the Lakeside mall is. That is the home of the high-spending believers, those most integrated into the manners and aspirations of the modern world. They now look richer and more confident than ever

before. They feel good. Yet, as we know, there is no feel-good factor for the Tories. The connection between wealth and political complacency has been severed. Earring Man is at a crossroads, wondering what Blair would look like in a nice pair of Versaces with perhaps a studded belt and some Gaultier shades.

Trapped in a man's body with a woman's mind

The transsexual who has just won a test-case in Brussels says all of us have at stake in her victory

I belong to a small community of people all born with the same unusual syndrome. It has the unfortunate name of transsexualism and is one of those rare conditions – like hermaphroditism – where the individual is born as a mixture of the sexes. There are thousands of us in the UK, and as soon as our condition is confirmed, we lose many of our civil liberties. We have no substantive employment rights, it is illegal for us to marry and we are not allowed to adopt children.

But of course we are people – lawyers, doctors, academics, nurses, business people, rich and poor, from shop assistants to peers of the realm, whose life-experience, curious to others, is normal to us. We do not believe that we are less worthy of human rights than anyone else: only less powerful. It is almost impossible to communicate how it feels to be born and to grow up in this way. Knowing nothing else, it is normal for us to find nature and nurture at odds, to know ourselves one thing while being brought up as another. Typically, then, from the age of four or five, the child knows that there is something wrong and, typically, they believe it will change naturally. Of course, it doesn't and by the age of eight or nine their distress is so great that they may simply hope to die.

Even if parents, doctor or child did want to speak about it, it is only recently that they would have had language to do that in: the syndrome

wasn't introduced to the general medical world until 1954, and its diagnostic criteria weren't agreed until 1980. There were whole generations who had no voice, no language and thus no way of articulating their profound sense of dislocation.

Indeed, it wasn't until an article in *Science* magazine last year that the physiological basis of transsexualism was finally demonstrated. Put most accessibly, the medical explanation is

We have no substantive employment rights; it is illegal for us to marry

that when the child is in the womb, it receives two shots of hormones, one to form the body and one to form the deep structures of the brain. In most cases, this formation is congruent; in a tiny minority of cases it isn't and the child is born the body of one sex and the brain of another.

Treatment, by hormone replacement therapy over a period of three to five years, has a 97 per cent success rate. As individuals go on to live otherwise unremarkable lives, the social penalties for being born with transsexualism seem inexplicable. I do not just lose my marriage, adoption and

employment rights. Although my external anatomy is the same as that of all other women, it is not illegal to rape me and if I were remanded in custody it would be in a men's prison.

Before 1970, I could not be legally raped, and if I went to prison for not paying my parking fees I would have been placed in Holloway. But after 1970, I could be raped and have no recourse to law. If sentenced to a prison term, I would serve it in a jail for men.

In 1970, the son and heir of Lord Rowallen gained an annulment of his marriage on the grounds that his wife, the model April Ashley, had been treated for transsexualism and was therefore legally male. To confirm this view, the judge set up a "sex-test" using criteria that have since been formally rejected by the world medical community but which still operate in the UK for legal purposes. The judge's comments were astonishingly brutal. April was not a woman but a "pastiche of femininity".

A life-giving way of understanding our personal circumstances, is to see them as symbolic of the need of the individual to define themselves, to live autonomously to explore the nature of their being. Alternatively, we may be seen as a symbol of communality, through our lived experience that men and women are not different in potential in achievement, or in need. Or again, like the myth of Tiresias, the

seer who was changed from man to woman and back again, as a symbol of new life, new vision, new ideas, a third point on which to stand to re-examine and call into question otherwise unquestionable social norms. Or perhaps we are a symbol of the requirement for compassion, a reminder that the degree of civilisation in a society can be judged by the way in which it treats those who are most vulnerable.

We are both vulnerable and powerful.

April Ashley was judged not a woman but a 'pastiche of femininity'

erless. But Vaclav Havel, the Czech philosopher cum politician in his essay *The Power of the Powerless*, spoke of the way that the crust of a dishonest social fabric can be broken "when a single person breaks the rule of the game, thus exposing it as a game ... the whole crust seems then to be made of tissue on the point of tearing and disintegrating uncontrollably".

My cases against the British Government were brought to open up just such a debate, the debate that Havel calls "the wellspring of truth". One debate leads to another; from those issues have sprung other issues of human rights, questions about the

legality of dismissing homosexuals and lesbians from the armed forces, about the equal treatment of people under the immigration laws, a new defence of the individual and a renewed debate about the real aims of life.

All that is required is for government to accept a return to the pre-1970 status quo, a move that is supported by medicine, a large section of legal opinion and many parliamentarians. There is no need for new legislation or new administrative systems: the Birth Certificate still contains a column where errors at registration can be corrected as they were before 1970. Time has shown that there were no practical complications with those corrections, and thus there is no realistic argument for not reinstating the practice. Indeed, there is every reason for regarding it as an urgent necessity.

For in the end, the rights under question are not just mine but yours. Laws that do not protect me, do not protect you, your child, your friend, your family. The unequal, inhumane treatment of us is a microcosm of the inhumanity, the injustice, with which you might be treated. The purposelessness of these laws, their brutality, the general ignorance about this state of affairs is, as Simone Weil puts it, "obedience to the force of gravity, the greatest sin". To change them is, for myself, and my colleagues, not just a matter of personal freedom but of a question of freedom for all of us.

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Stirling Silliphant

The screenwriter Stirling Silliphant was a master of "the Oscar scene". Hollywood parlance for a scene that allows a star to pour out his heart and show his or her full range - and which inevitably features heavily in campaigns to get nominated for an award.

This applied not just to lead players, like Rod Steiger's racist Southern policeman in *In the Heat of the Night* (1967) or Cliff Robertson's retard-turned-genius in *Charly* (1968), both of whom won Oscars in Silliphant-scripted roles; it is impossible to think of *The Poseidon Adventure* (1972) without Shelley Winters' "I can hold my breath, Maury. It's the one thing I can do" monologue and death scene springing to mind.

Fond of quoting Raymond Chandler's dictum, "A good writer is one who can take a cliché and write it as though it has never been used before", Silliphant wrote unashamed movie-star parts for unashamed movie stars. Unfortunately, such scripts depended on genuine stars for their success. Silliphant's dialogue for *The Towering Inferno* (1974) or *The Enforcer* (1976) is no better than that in his less successful films, but it was tailored for real stars like Steve McQueen and Clint Eastwood; many other "stars" lacked the screen presence to deliver his dialogue as if they believed it.

Never was this more apparent than in *The Silent Flute* (1978), a pet project Silliphant developed with Bruce Lee and James Coburn. While someone with Lee's personal magnetism and strong belief in the project could have pulled it off, David Carradine simply looked like an uncomfortable straight man in a *Monty Python* sketch.

Yet Silliphant was far from a hack. Generally regarded as a "hired gun", he continually failed in his efforts to interest studios in his own more spiritual, personal projects, such as his long-held ambition to film Carlos Castaneda's *The Teachings of Don Juan* ("Not being able to make that film has got to be the greatest disappointment of my life," he once said). None the less, at his best Silliphant produced high-quality work within a commercial frame-

work, containing ideas that could have seemed outrageous to a mass audience at the time - a black policeman more civilised and intelligent than a white one, for example. A committed liberal, he took great trouble with his research, and often the vagaries of his dialogue had much to do with the egos of his casts (he had to rewrite McQueen's part in *The Towering Inferno* to give him as many lines as his co-star Paul Newman).

Born in Detroit in 1918, Silliphant wrote his first story at the age of five, and worked as a sports writer before becoming a publicity director for 20th Century-Fox between 1946 and 1953. He became an independent producer on *The Fox Lotus Story* (1953), alternating between low-budget films such as Phil Karlson's *Five Against the House* (1955) and Don Siegel's *The Lineup* (1958, an expanded version of a television series) and writing for television shows such as *Alfred Hitchcock Presents*, *Route 66* and *The Naked City*.

It was not until MGM hired Silliphant to write an adaptation of John Wyndham's *The Midwich Cuckoos* for Ronald Colman in 1958 that Silliphant really hit his stride as a screenwriter. Colman's death the same year and worries over the film's potential offensiveness to the powerful Catholic League of Decency kept it off the screen until 1960, when it was filmed as *Village of the Damned*. The infuriated Silliphant broke his contract with MGM and went back to television for several years before returning to films in 1965 to script Sidney Pollack's directorial debut, *The Slender Thread*.

In the Sixties Silliphant was an early student of Bruce Lee, recommending his teacher to many of his Hollywood contacts and even writing a scene-stealing cameo for him in *Marlowe* (1969), an enjoyable update of Raymond Chandler's *The Little Sister*, as well as a role in the television series *Longstreet*, although attempts to build a series around him were constantly thwarted by the studio executives' reluctance to gamble on an Asian actor.

Silliphant proved more successful with black actors, thanks



Sidney Poitier, left, and Rod Steiger in *In the Heat of the Night*, 1967. Silliphant's screenplay won him an Oscar

Photograph: Ronald Grant Archive

to the growing media attention on the civil rights movement, which found an eloquent screen spokesman in Sidney Poitier's detective Virgil Tibbs, one of the first black screen heroes in a position of authority, in *In the Heat of the Night*. Described by the writer as *The Defiant Ones* with cops instead of cons, it slickly combined a message movie with an above-average thriller plot to great critical and commercial success and earned Silliphant an Academy Award for Best Adapted Screenplay. (The following year he won a Golden Globe Award for his screenplay for *Charly*).

Just as successful, and certainly more influential, was the *Shaft* series. With its hip theme music, gritty location work and a very contemporary hero in Richard Roundtree's black private eye, Silliphant produced the 1971 original, served as executive producer on *Shaft's Big Score* (1972) and as writer on *Shaft in Africa* (1973) before the hero spun off into his own short-lived television series. Although often dismissed as clichéd and patronising, the films were unique in being the first from a major studio to show black characters as being self-reliant as white action heroes. Explaining their success in an interview with Tony Crowley in 1978, Silliphant noted, "It is in the mistakes that a film can re-

ally work. The first *Shaft* was raw, had mistakes, heaps of them - you could almost see the shadow of the camera boom. But it had an angry kind of vigour to it. And that, I think, goes with what people want: honesty, challenge, excitement, involvement, unpredictability and energy."

Although certainly no worse than Paul Gallico's novel, *The Poseidon Adventure* was one of his weaker screenplays. Its surprise box-office success kicked-started the Seventies obsession with disaster movies that would dominate the decade and much of the remainder of Silliphant's career. He was to work with the *Poseidon* producer Irwin Allen

three more times, most successfully adapting two novels brought by rival studios into one picture and coming up with one of the biggest hits of the decade, *The Towering Inferno*. Silliphant went to great lengths researching the picture in an effort to turn it into more than merely a "Grand Hotel catches fire" star vehicle, adding an attack on poor safety standards after discovering from firemen that their biggest enemy wasn't so much fire as corrupt builders.

These disaster films were punctuated by efforts for major talents that failed to quite come off. *The Killer Elite* (1975), a confused spy thriller not helped by its director, Sam Peckinpah's

contempt for the material and on-set introduction to cocaine; *The Enforcer* (1976), a tired third outing for Clint Eastwood's Dirty Harry; and *Telefon* (1977), an efficient but outdated Cold War thriller started by director Peter Hyams (who co-wrote) but finished by Don Siegel.

Originally intended as an immediate follow-up to *Poseidon*, and somewhat bizarrely reworking the plot structure of *In the Heat of the Night* as a killer bee movie, the failure of *The Swarm* (1978) had a catastrophic effect on the reputations of both Irwin Allen and Silliphant. Silliphant had been involved in flops before - most

notably *Murphy's War* (1971), which left a trail of debts in its wake - but never anything on this scale. With crass dialogue to spare ("General, can we trust a scientist who prays?" "Son, I wouldn't trust any other kind"), it became a favourite of Clive James, but despite its inane optimism it was from Warner Bros, who lavished their biggest-ever budget and largest-ever release on the picture. *The Swarm* proved to be not just the flop of the year but of the decade. Almost overnight Silliphant's reputation turned from Oscar-winning scribe to unwitting purveyor of high camp. A further screenplay for Allen, *When Time Ran Out* (1980, about a volcanic eruption), proved, if anything, even more inane, despite the presence of *High Noon*'s Carl Foreman as co-writer.

Of Silliphant's subsequent projects, only an above-average adaptation of Stephen King's *Salem's Lot* (1979) was of any note, which he executive-produced for television from a script by Paul Monash after failing to get his own script of it made as a theatrical feature. Like many Hollywood professionals of his day, Silliphant found it hard to adapt to the late Seventies and early Eighties as what was once unconventional became the convention a new generation of writers was reacting against. His style found itself overtaken by films that were either more subtly written or more explicitly realistic: the bizarre Sylvester Stallone arm-wrestling/child-custody vehicle *Over the Top*, his last produced film screenplay, might just have worked in the Thirties with Wallace Beery and Jackie Cooper, but in 1987 seemed more the stuff of daytime television than big-budget cinema.

Yes, if the later projects were ill-conceived, Silliphant was well paid - enough to retire to Thailand in 1985 with his wife Tiana Alexandra Du Long, who directed the 1994 documentary *From Hollywood to Hawaii*.

Trevor Williams

Stirling Silliphant, screenwriter, born Detroit 16 January 1918; married 1974 Tiana Alexandra Du Long (four children); died Bangkok 26 April 1996.

Béla de Csillery

As a Hungarian conductor with a formidable European training, Béla de Csillery was one of the most important music teachers to emerge from Britain during the post-war years. As Kent County Music Adviser from 1962 to 1981 he moulded the careers of hundreds of musicians and made the Kent Youth Orchestra one of the most impressive ensembles of its kind.

I never managed to return his last phone call, the day before he died, when he gently reminded me I had promised to secure him an engagement with one of the orchestras I had conducted recently in Eastern Europe. Such persistence from this sprightly 80-year-old reminded me of the uncompromising determination and energy which characterised most of his extraordinary career.

I first met him when I was 13 years old, singing one of the solos in Britten's *Ceremony of Carols* in Rochester Cathedral. He was accompanied by the beautiful solo violinist Gillian Sansom, whom he had just married. My first impressions were of a kind, multilingual, worldly-wise and cultured musician from a strange, foreign land who had decided to make his home in rural Kent. He was extremely attractive and obviously considerably experienced in the art of being romantic. I still remember the sexual charge between him and Gillian on that cold December evening.

Although a prodigious vi-

olinist from an early age, de Csillery initially studied law instead of music and was awarded a doctorate at Budapest University. His law training came in useful in later years. He was always a tough negotiator and very much a political animal with a talent for finding unusual ways to solve administrative and financial problems. Determined to make a career in music, he continued to study at the Liszt Ferenc Music Academy in Budapest, the Berlin Hochschule für Musik and the Accademia Santa Cecilia in Rome. His teachers included Zoltan Kodály, Paul Hindemith, Ernest Ensermet and the renowned conductor Bernardino Molinari. Before the Second World War he enjoyed a successful career as an orchestral violinist and soloist giving concerts throughout Europe and Scandinavia. The many conductors for whom he played included the legendary Wilhelm Mengelberg and the great Felix Weingartner, a protégé of Franz Liszt.

His early love for an outdoor life and climbing developed during these years. Later, in the 1950s, he climbed many of the peaks in the Valais region of the Alps including the Matterhorn, an unusual and important achievement for that time. At the age of 30 he became Music Director of one of Hungary's main orchestras, the Budapest Municipal Orchestra, where he stayed for four years. When Ernest Ensermet first saw him conduct he immediately engaged him with the famous Suisse Romande Orchestra. De Csillery's conducting career flourished, and he was offered engagements with the Philharmonic Orchestras of Baden-Baden, Dresden, Munich and Barcelona, and the Symphony Orchestras of



De Csillery: uncompromising

Madrid, Innsbruck and Radio Turin.

On Ensermet's recommendation he came to Britain in 1953, and was appointed Head of Music at Trinity College, Glenalmond whilst working as a conductor with the Scottish National Orchestra. He always insisted he had chosen to become a British citizen but, sadly, the Soviet annexation of Hungary in 1956 prevented him from returning to his homeland. In 1962 de Csillery came to Kent to take up the post of Music Adviser to Kent County Council, an inspired appointment by the then Director of Education, John Haynes. De Csillery was encouraged to create the Kent County Youth Orchestra in 1963, the year he made his debut with the London Symphony Orchestra. He married Gillian Sansom in 1965 and, with their two sons, they made their home in Maidstone.

In a few years the Kent Youth Orchestra was able to impress by performing Mahler's Fifth Symphony, a work which, at that time, few professional orchestras would dare tackle. As a 14-

year-old, I played the seventh horn part in those performances. I remember de Csillery's frustration at not being able to extract enough passion from the string section in this emotionally demanding work. As a last resort he turned up one morning with a red heart sewn to the sleeve of his shirt, protesting "Now do you understand what I mean?" It produced the desired result.

The Kent Youth Orchestra was one of the first to record for BBC Radio 3 during the 1960s with a stunning interpretation of Rossini's *Italian Girl in Algiers* and the brilliant young Andrew Haigh playing one of Mozart's piano concertos. The session was later issued on BBC Records. Other recordings included an impressive and valuable account of Dohnányi's rarely performed Second Symphony.

In the late Sixties the orchestra made their first highly acclaimed European tour of Switzerland followed by extensive tours throughout Germany and Belgium. The orchestra was then chosen to represent Britain in Herbert von Karajan's first youth orchestra festival in 1970 when some players were fortunate to perform for the then still youthful Karajan in Brahms's Second Symphony.

Some of Béla de Csillery's teaching techniques were based on Zoltan Kodály's highly successful choral method of training. At the Kent Junior Music School - which included teachers of equal calibre to the London music colleges - and the Summer Music Schools at Benenden, de Csillery insisted on everyone singing in his choir, even if they believed they had no talent as singers. The results were stupendous. To hear a 200-strong group of instrumentalists with no apparent vocal ability

singing Sir Michael Tippett's *formidably difficult Plebs Angelica* at the Benenden Summer School was simply staggering.

De Csillery's commitment to amateur music-making was also considerable. In Perth, Dundee and Maidstone he transformed the local societies musically and economically, giving regular concerts to packed houses. He formed the semi-professional Kent Sinfonia, taking music to the more inaccessible corners of the county. He was a regular guest conductor with the BBC Training Orchestra in Bristol. His schools concerts with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra were a revelation, introducing thousands of children, with his unique wit and depth of knowledge, to the world of classical music. When I finally became a professional horn player it was almost entirely due to the valuable experience of those years.

His work ethic, regarding a relentless and determined dedication to music, was uncompromising (he was an exceptional and, at times, tyrannically demanding teacher). When I gave up being a professional musician to work for the BBC as a producer, he told me sharply that I was wasting my life. I think, in a way, he felt betrayed. He demanded total loyalty from those he took under his wing. He hated the idea of wasted opportunity and his greatest pleasure was to revel in the success of his students.

Krisz Rusmanis

Béla de Csillery, conductor and music administrator, born Budapest 26 October 1913; married 1964 Johanna Marcy (marriage dissolved 1959); 1963 Gillian Sansom (died 1993; two sons); died Maidstone, Kent 17 April 1996.

Stephen Miller was amongst the last of the general ophthalmologists and one of the first of the specialists - his area of expertise being glaucoma.

He entered ophthalmology almost by accident, after failing to get the house job of his choice at Aberdeen. Appointed a house surgeon at the Royal Infirmary, Hull, in 1937, he was introduced to ophthalmology, and served in the RNVR during the Second World War as an ophthalmic specialist.

After the war he was encouraged by his fellow Scotsman Sir Stewart Duke Elder, the country's foremost ophthalmologist, to come south. With a few years of training at Moorfields Eye Hospital he was on the consultant staff of three major hospitals - St George's Hospital, the National Hospital for Nervous Diseases, and Moorfields itself.

Miller always advised his trainees to "come down" on a subject, i.e. to focus on a single problem, and he chose to do so himself in his lifelong quest to understand and treat glaucoma and in neuro-ophthalmology. In the 1960s he was one of the first ophthalmologists in the country to see the potential of fluorescein angiography, a method

of studying the retinal circulation by the injection of fluorescein dye. This innovation, pioneered in the United States, had previously been ignored by the ophthalmology establishment. Miller set up the first unit to conduct the technique at the National Hospital, Queen Square. This single act launched the career of some of the most distinguished ophthalmologists in the United Kingdom and led to the formation of a specialist department which has remained pre-eminent.

Another important factor in the development of fluorescein angiography was the use of private donations - in particular, his friend and patient Tommy Frost gave money. The Frost Foundation continues to be a major source of research and training grants for ophthalmology trainees.

In the last few years, Miller's enthusiasm, vision and integrity enabled him to persuade Guide Dogs for the Blind to become a benefactor for ophthalmic research programmes, and his personal friendship with King Hussein of Jordan led to the establishment of a Fellowship at St John Ophthalmic Hospital in Jerusalem.

St John's occupied much of Miller's time, especially in his so-called retirement. He tirelessly raised money for this institution (some £7m in total), which he saw as providing a greatly needed service for the patients and a unique opportunity for trainees from all parts of the world.

Miller had a special gift for writing. His personal letters were masterpieces of clarity, wit and kindness, and he put this talent to use in the many scientific publications he wrote for and in books such as *Modern Trends in Ophthalmology* (1973) and *Parsons' Diseases of the Eye* (16th edition, 1978, to 18th edition, 1990). He became Editor of the *British Journal of Ophthalmology* in 1973.

He derived much pleasure from being Master of the Oxford Ophthalmological Congress in 1969-70 and gave a superb lecture on glaucoma for which he was awarded the Doyne Medal of the Congress in 1972.

In addition he was Surgeon-Oculist to the Queen from 1974 to 1980, and was created KCVO in 1979.

For him to participate in so many activities Miller relied on a secure and happy home life. His wife supported him in his busy career and nursed him in his final illness, which he endured with great dignity and not a little rage. This difficult time was relieved by seeing one of his sons appointed to Moorfields Eye Hospital, continuing his interest in glaucoma, while another son was installed as a QC.

Miller remained attached to his native Scotland and he was an enthusiastic golfer and fisherman; he was also an excellent pianist and an exceptional bridge player. Although he did not paint himself, he had a beautiful collection of watercolours by Scottish artists.

Patrick J. Holmes Sellers

Stephen James Hamilton Miller, ophthalmologist, born Arbroath 19 July 1915; Surgeon, Moorfields Eye Hospital 1954-80; Ophthalmic Surgeon, St George's Hospital 1951-80, National Hospital 1955-78, King Edward VII Hospital for Officers 1965-80; Surgeon-Oculist to HM Household 1965-74, to the Queen 1974-80; KCVO 1979; Hospitalist, St John Ophthalmic Hospital, Jerusalem 1980-90; married 1949 Heather Motion (three sons); died Woking, Surrey 12 April 1996.

Sir Stephen Miller

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Birthdays

Mr Naim Attallah, publisher, 65; Mr Gary Bertini, conductor, 69; Sir Richard Brooke, chartered accountant, 81; Mr Steve Carbone, jockey, 36; Mr Ian Curtis, playwright, 61; Lord Dahrendorf, Warden, Sir Anthony's College, Oxford, 67; Sir Henry de Waal QC, 65; Mr Glenn Ford, actor, 80; Dr Michael Goldstein, Vice-Chancellor, Coventry University, 57; Sir Irvine Goulding, former High Court judge, 86; Mr Gordon Greenidge, former West Indies cricketer, 45; Mr Joseph Heller, novelist, 73; Sir Robert Hill, reliability consultant and former president, Institute of Marine Engineers, 59; Mr W. Leonard Hyde, former president, Leeds Permanent Building Society, 82; Mr Kevin Kennedy, chairman and chief executive, Domestic Appliances and Personal Care Division, Philips Electronics, 59; Professor Philip King, sculptor, 62; Miss Joanna Lumley, actress, 50; Sir Bruce McPhail, managing director, P & O, 57; Mr Julian Mitchell, writer and playwright, 61; Mr Be Nilsson, composer, 39; Admiral Sir John Woodward, former Commander-in-Chief, Naval Home Command, 64.

Anniversaries

Birtles Joseph Addison, diarist and essayist, 1672; Charles Macklin (McLaughlin), actor, 1690; Arthur Wellesley (Wesley), first Duke of Wellington, field marshal and politician, 1769; George Inness, painter, 1825; Jules-Adolphe Aimé-Louis Breton, painter, 1827; Hilaire, Comte de Chardonnet, inventor of rayon, 1839; Edith Somerville (Anna Genovese), author, 1858; Sir Philip Armand Hamilton Gibbs, author, 1877; Deaths: Dermot MacMurrough (Diarmuid MacMurchada), King of Leinster, 1171; Pope Pius V, 1572; John Dryden, poet, 1700; Jean-François de Troy, painter, 1730; Dr John Walker, inventor of the friction

match, 1858; David Livingstone, explorer, 1813; Antonia Leopold Dvorák, composer, 1904; Joseph Goebbels, Nazi leader and propaganda chief, committed suicide 1945; William Fox, film producer, 1952; Sylvia Townsend Warner, novelist, 1978. On this day the Union of Scotland and England was proclaimed, 1707; Mozart's opera *The Marriage of Figaro* was first performed, Vienna, 1786; the first tunnel on a railway in Britain was built, 1800; the London Library, founded by Thomas Carlyle, W.E. Gladstone, Lord Macaulay and others, was officially opened, 1841; the Great Exhibition was opened by Queen Victoria in Hyde Park, London, 1851; Queen Victoria was proclaimed Empress of India, 1876; work on reclaiming the Zaydier Zee was begun, 1919; Cyprus became a British Crown Colony, 1925; Professor Auguste Piccard made the first ascent into the stratosphere, a distance of just over 10 miles, 1931; in New York, the Empire State Building was opened, 1931; Berlin was captured by the Russians, 1945; in Britain, the gas industry was nationalised, 1948; in Clerkenwell, London, a bullion was was attacked and a gang stole gold ingots worth £750,000, 1967. Today is May Day (Labour Day) and the Feast Day of St Amator or Amator, St Brocius or Briene, St Joseph the Worker, St Peregrine Laziosi, St Sigismund of Burgundy and St Theodard of Narbonne.

Lectures
Tate Gallery: Sarah O'Brien Twibig, "Modern Utopia: Kandinsky, Malevich and El Lissitzky", 1pm.
Stirling University (Logic Lecture Theatre): Sir Crispin Tickell, "Economic with the Environment: a question of values", 6pm.
Leicester University: Dr Chris Hunter, "Self-assembling Porphyria Oligomers", 2pm.
Loughborough University: Professor Neil Halliwell, "Shedding Light on Engineering", 5.30pm.

Dinners
The Speaker
The Speaker of the House of Commons, Miss Betty Boothroyd, held a dinner yesterday evening in Speaker's House, London SW1, in honour of Dr Rodrigo Rivera Salazar, President of the Colombian House of Representatives, and Mrs Rivera. Señor Carlos Lemos-Simmonds, the Colombian Ambassador, and Señora Lemos-Simmonds were also present.

HMS Victory
Admiral Sir Michael Boyce, Second Sea Lord and Commander-in-Chief Naval Home Command, hosted a dinner held yesterday evening on board his flagship, HMS Victory, at HM Naval Base, Portsmouth. Among the guests were Earl Howe, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, and Mr Christopher Bland, Lord-Lieutenant of the Isle of Wight.

European-Atlantic Group
Barnabas Chalker of Wallasey, Minister for Overseas Administration, was the guest of honour at a meeting of the European-Atlantic Group held yesterday evening at St Ermin's Hotel, London SW1. Her subject was "Overseas Aid World-Wide".

ROYAL ENGAGEMENTS

The Duke of Edinburgh, Patron, attended the Air League Annual Reception at St James's Palace, Prince Edward, Patron, attended a concert given by the London Mozart Players at the Fairfield Halls, Croydon, Surrey. The Duke of Gloucester, President, East Midlands Tourist Board, visits tourist sites in Leicestershire and Nottinghamshire. The Duke of Kent, Patron, the 11th Count, visits Painshill Park, Cobham, Surrey.

Changing of the Guard
The Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment mounts the Queen's Life Guard at Horse Guards, 11am. Nijmegen Company Grenadier Guards mounts the Queen's Guard, at Buckingham Palace, 11.15am. Band provided by the Coldstream Guards.

For Gazette BIRTHS, MARRIAGES & DEATHS, please telephone 0171-293 2011, or fax to 0171-293 2010. Charges are 65.50 a line (VAT incl).

مكتبة الجليل

Foreign Exchange Rates

STERLING			DOLLAR			DOLLAR		SPOT-MARK	
Country	Spot	1 month 3 months	Country	Spot	1 month 3 months	Country	Spot	1 month 3 months	
US	15006	9-7	25-15	1000	—	—	04821	—	
Canada	12040	11-3	50-19	13615	2-1	2-3	04873	—	
Germany	23002	52-10	89-149	15206	26-24	84-10	04900	—	
France	71686	15-10	62-145	14700	27-32	107-32	04922	—	
Italy	12040	40-10	22-149	15548	57-54	105-32	04922	—	
Japan	5678	15-10	22-278	10476	45-44	93-33	04928	—	
ECU	12254	15-11	45-10	12286	5-4	15-10	04938	—	
Spain	12040	15-10	22-149	15548	57-54	105-32	04922	—	
Denmark	85920	175-33	320-333	43925	55-52	270-220	04933	—	
Netherlands	22676	65-58	107-184	17159	59-56	107-184	04933	—	
Sweden	12040	15-10	22-149	15548	57-54	105-32	04922	—	
Norway	95175	10-54	320-333	43925	55-52	270-220	04933	—	
Switzerland	12040	15-10	22-149	15548	57-54	105-32	04922	—	
Australia	10695	20-11	87-45	12845	37-34	105-32	04922	—	
Hong Kong	12040	15-10	22-149	15548	57-54	105-32	04922	—	
Malaya	12040	15-10	22-149	15548	57-54	105-32	04922	—	
India	12040	15-10	22-149	15548	57-54	105-32	04922	—	
Saudi Arabia	12040	15-10	22-149	15548	57-54	105-32	04922	—	
Singapore	12040	15-10	22-149	15548	57-54	105-32	04922	—	

OTHER SPOT RATES			OTHER SPOT RATES		
Country	Sterling	Dollar	Country	Sterling	Dollar
Argentina	14582	03992	Nigeria	108756	643000
Brazil	14582	03992	Oman	108756	643000
Canada	12040	15-10	Philippines	302326	262000
Egypt	12040	15-10	Portugal	22003	10000
France	71686	15-10	Romania	108756	643000
Germany	23002	52-10	Saudi Arabia	108756	643000
Greece	35942	345000	Spain	12040	15-10
India	12040	15-10	Switzerland	12040	15-10
Italy	12040	15-10	Thailand	12040	15-10
Japan	5678	15-10	United Arab Emirates	108756	643000
South Africa	12040	15-10	UAE	108756	643000
Sweden	12040	15-10	Yemen	108756	643000

Note: Forward rates quoted from 1 month to 3 months. Other rates are spot rates. Dollar rates quoted are approximate. For the latest rates, consult your bank or the Foreign Exchange Commission.

E Bayes		E Bayes		E Bayes	
Australia(Dollars)	19535	France(France)	75000	New Zealand(Dollars)	23385
Austria(Schillings)	155700	Germany(Mark)	22275	Norway(Krone)	86300
Belgium(Franks)	457300	Germany(Dreimarke)	358000	Portugal(Escudo)	228250
Canada(Dollars)	20030	Hong Kong(Dollars)	14800	Spain(Pesetas)	104000
Ceylon(Pounds)	08800	India(Pound)	8500	Sweden(Kronor)	100000
Denmark(Krone)	84300	Japan(Yen)	230000	Switzerland(Franks)	11875
Finland(Marks)	24975	Japan(Yen)	65000	Turkey(Lira)	50000000
France(Marks)	72400	Malta(Liri)	63350	United States(Dollars)	50725

UK		Germany		US		Japan	
Spain	6.00%	Discount	2.50%	Promo	8.75%	Discount	0.50%
France		Lombard	4.50%	Discount	6.00%	Belgium	2.50%
Intervention	3.70%	Canada		Fixed Funds	5.25%	Discount	
Italy		Prime	7.00%	10-Day Repo		Central	3.50%
Canada	9.00%	Discount	5.00%	Sweden	7.75%	Switzerland	
Netherlands		Discount		(Repo Ave)	6.50%	Discount	18.00%
Advisors	2.70%	Discount	3.25%			Lombard	4.25%

Country	5 yr	Yield %	10 yr	yield %	Country	5 yr	Yield %	10 yr	yield %
LUX	300%	735	87%	798	Netherlands	9%	525	8%	626
US	570%	640	57%	685	Spain	10%	435	10.5%	101
Japan	84%	223	31%	335	Italy	10 1/2%	321	10 1/2%	382
Australia	57%	614	18%	860	Sweden	7 1/2%	1	7 1/2%	610
Germany	57%	638	8%	635	Denmark	1%	752	6%	820
France	57%	547	7 1/2%	630	ECU/DM	9 1/4%	534	7 1/2%	670

Source: HSBC Global Research

Yields calculated on local basis. * Denotes new benchmarks

	O'night	7 Day	1 Month	3 Months	6 Months	1 Year
Insearbank	5 1/8	5 1/8	5 1/8	6 1/8	6 1/8	6 1/8
Sterling CDs	-	-	6	6 1/2	6 1/2	6 1/2
Local Authority Depo	-	5 1/8	5 1/8	5 1/8	-	6 1/4
Discount Market Depo	5 1/8	6 1/8	-	-	-	-
Treasury Bills (Buy)	-	-	5 1/2	5 1/2	-	-
Dollar Cds	-	-	5 1/2	5 1/2	5 1/2	5 1/2
-	-	-	4 1/2	4 1/2	4 1/2	4 1/2

[illegible]

Series	Settlement price: 3816.0	closing offer price			Call/Put Total/volume
May	3750	3800	3850	3900	6/81
Jun	109/38	43/27	20/54	6/81	30/112
Jul	109/38	78/56	51/81	30/112	--
Aug	109/38	102/75	76/59	52/127	--
Sep	109/38	119/50	81/74	67/140	--

INDUSTRIAL METALS - London Metal Exchange						
Symbol	Cash	3 mths	Volume	LME Stocks	chg	
Aluminum H	550-50	550-50	610-50	•	576	
Antimony	535-45	535-40	2357	10100	•	50
Copper A	2669-75	2669-40	72285	30055-5	•	2800
Lead	800-02	793-84	8864	28200	•	15
Nickel	7890-90	7890-45	3765	34800	•	238
Tin	9480-90	9480-45	4059	8770	•	20
Zinc	9285-35	9285-35	4559	62455	•	700

1000 lbs. = 1 ton
 1000 kg. = 1 metric ton
 1000 gms. = 1 kg.

Simple unit conversions: 1 ton = 2240 lbs., 1 metric ton = 2204 lbs.

Item	Q	E	Colins	Q	E	Q	E	
Platinum	400.75	285.75	Brianne	407	271	Koughnath	383.95	255.65
Palladium	23.75	85.60	Brianne 5 oz	206	137	Sova	80.86	80.83
Silver spot	5.28	3.50	Brianne 25 oz	94	69	Nobles	593.408	298.78
Gold Bufr	39.30	280.28	Brianne 10 oz	51	34	Maple Leaf	393.407	282.71

Source: Scotia & Bank

[illegible]

May	Cotton (NY)	UScent/lb	62.90	May	Sunflower Oil	\$/tonne	78
June	Wool	Acent/kg	135.00	Aug/Oct	Rapeseed Oil	FL/100kg	1050
April	Rubber*	Mcent/kg	263.50	April/May	Bransard Oil	\$/tonne	805.00

IPE	5.30pm	chg	Yr ago	IPE	close	chg	Jun	Spot C/F	North West Europe
Jun	18.20	-0.08	18.58	May	165.00	-5.00	Jun	2120	Unleaded Gasoline
Jul	18.50	-0.48	18.55	Jun	165.00	-2.00	Jul	3020	Naphtha
Aug	18.00	-0.30	18.53	Jul	164.00	-2.25	Aug	1850	EC Gasoil
Vol:	27281						Sep	1900	Heavy Fuel Oil
		Index	19.74	Vol	1832				

	Index 1970=100	Index 1970=100	Index 1970=100	Index 1970=100	Index 1970=100	Index 1970=100	
Index	1970=100	21476	+002	20050	+653	19383	+684
Agricultural	1970=100	32257	-256	28175	+1440	26120	+5376
Energy	1969=100	7429	+103	7131	+436	6105	+6230
Index 1 Metals	1977=100	18884	-067	19322	-232	18934	-527
Livestock	1970=100	17542	+227	16271	-180	16843	+658
Prices Metals	1972=100	48517	-003	48886	+108	50121	-121

[illegible]

exit charge applies when units are sold to former off-duty or former full-time employees.

Hanson's Grid stake sale sparks confusion

TOM STEVENSON
City Editor

The future of the National Grid was plunged into confusion yesterday after Hanson sold its 12.5 per cent stake in the country's electricity transmission network to James Capel, the broking arm of HSBC. The deal, which appeared to link the stake with a little-known Greek group with Saudi Arabian trading connections, sparked a wave of takeover speculation.

James Capel remained tight-lipped on its plans for the 210.5 million shares it had bought, refusing to add to a statement that it had "hedged the market risk of the holding through a structured transaction with Crescent Holdings GmbH, a member of the Olayan group of companies".

Athens-based Olayan was described yesterday as "usually a long-term shareholder". Its interests include Coca-Cola bottling rights and a Land

Rover distribution franchise in Saudi Arabia.

The £405m sale of shares in the Grid to Capel for 192.5p a share left dealers confused about the ultimate buyer of the stake. Wide-ranging rumours during the day linked the holding with, among others, George Soros, the American speculator, and GEC, the defence and electronics group.

Some speculated that the sale might actually be no more than a ruse to allow Hanson to

appear to comply with a requirement to reduce its holding in the Grid while retaining an economic interest in the shares. As the owner of a regional electricity company, Eastern Group, Hanson is under an obligation to cut its holding in the Grid to less than 1 per cent.

Hanson denied that it had any interest in the shares after the sale and described as coincidence the fact that Niven Duncan, a consultant to Olayan, was also the former chairman-designate of Eastern Group.

Christopher Collins, vice chairman of Hanson, said: "Our transaction was with James Capel. This is not a case of us warehousing our shareholding. We no longer have any economic interest in the Grid, ownership rights or beneficial interest."

Shares in National Grid rose 6p to 205p on the takeover talk, despite the fact that the company's independence is, in theory, protected by a govern-

MAID shares soar on news of IBM link

Investment: Abtrust emerges as force

Market Report: Perfect skin at Smith & Nephew

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CITY & BUSINESS EDITOR: JEREMY WARNER

Taxpayer faces massive bill for power shake-up

MICHAEL HARRISON

The Government may be faced with a bill running into millions of pounds if it is to meet its target of allowing all 23 million domestic electricity customers to choose their supplier from 1998, it emerged yesterday.

Industry officials have warned that if competition is introduced on a trial basis before 1998 in the way that it has been in the gas industry - then it may result in large compensation payments to RJB Mining, headed by Richard Budge, which took over the English coal-fields a year ago.

The problem arises from the so-called "back-to-back" contracts signed between British Coal, the two electricity generators, National Power and PowerGen, and the 12 regional electricity companies at the time of privatisation.

Under these generators are contracted to buy about £900m of coal a year from RJB Mining until April 1998. All the electricity generated from the coal is then sold to the Recs to satisfy demand from the domestic market.

If the market is opened up to competition on a trial basis before 1998 the Recs may lose some customers. The knock-on effects would be reduced demand from the generators and

a reduced requirement on their part for coal.

Officials at the Office of Electricity Regulation said yesterday that in such circumstances the Government would have to step in and compensate the industry.

This is one of the reasons it may not be possible to run pilot trials before April 1998, placing a question mark over the Government's ability to meet its deadline.

Professor Stephen Littlechild, the industry watchdog, insisted yesterday that the industry was "on track" to meet the target of liberalisation in 1998. He said he expected all the main elements needed to create the structure for competition to be in place within the next month. This would enable rival Recs and other suppliers to test their systems for supplying customers in regions other than their own and settle accounts within the electricity pool, the wholesale market for England and Wales.

However, many industry observers believe that the Government and the regulator have set themselves too formidable a timetable.

Professor Littlechild conceded it was "tight" but achievable. But one large generator said it did not see how the target date could conceivably be met.



Compensation rights: Richard Budge (right) and Stephen Littlechild, who insists liberalisation is on track

Offer opposes US generator bid

The electricity industry regulator, Professor Stephen Littlechild, gave his first indication yesterday that he would oppose any attempt by Southern Company of the US to take over National Power, Britain's biggest generator, writes Michael Harrison.

Professor Littlechild gave a clear hint that he would want any bid blocked on the same grounds that the Government barred the takeovers by National Power and PowerGen of regional electricity companies.

Southern also owns a REC - South Western Electricity - so any bid by it for National Power would amount to unacceptable vertical integration unless Southern disposed of its interest in Sweb.

Asked whether he would object to a merger between Southern and National Power, Professor Littlechild said: "In as far as they would be run as a single company the same detriment would apply."

Professor Littlechild refused to be drawn on whether he would open an inquiry into National Power if it went ahead with plans for a shareholder incentive package worth up to £2bn to fend off a possible Southern bid.

But it seems unlikely this would prompt a fresh review of electricity prices. National Power, he said, had been highly profitable since privatisation which was why Offer had so strongly supported the Gov-

ernment's decision to encourage more competition in the generating market by blocking its takeover of Southern Electricity, the UK EEC.

Professor Littlechild also delivered a warning shot across the bows of PowerGen, saying that he expected the generator to go through with the £400m sale of power stations to the Hanson-owned Eastern Group.

PowerGen warned last week that it was reconsidering the deal following Trade and Industry Secretary Ian Lang's shock decision to block its purchase of Midlands Electricity.

But Professor Littlechild said: "I don't envisage that they will want to pull out of a sale they have agreed with another company. I would expect that sale will go ahead."

Behind the comment was a thinly-veiled warning that the regulator would have no hesitation in referring PowerGen to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission if it backed out of its agreement to dispose of the two power stations with a capacity of 2,000 megawatts.

"Clearly the situation would be serious if they didn't," he added. There was not enough competition in generation two years ago and there isn't enough now.

He was speaking as Offer announced that 1995 had been another good year for electricity customers with complaints down 20 per cent and prices 4 per cent lower in real terms.

Controversy over fat dogs Bro to the e

George says Britain may be safer outside the single currency

JOHN EISENHAMMER
JOHN WILCOCK
and NIC CICUTTI

Eddie George, the Governor of the Bank of England, yesterday said the UK should only adopt a single European currency if it was going to be a "safe club to join". He added that Britain could survive outside European economic and monetary union

and might be safer outside if the convergence criteria appeared unsustainable.

Appearing on Jimmy Young's programme on BBC Radio 2, Mr George also admitted that he had been wrong last year when he argued with the Chancellor of the Exchequer that interest rates should go up rather than down. The Governor conceded that this disagreement

damaged his credibility with many people, since it became obvious afterwards that the Chancellor's downward movement in rates had been the correct one.

When asked if Britain could exist perfectly well outside EMU, Mr George said: "I believe so." He said the issue for the UK, when the time came, was "whether or not EMU is a

safe club to join." Referring to "tension" between other EU countries, he added: "If those tensions looked serious, if the convergence criteria looked as if they would be unsustainable, then frankly I think we could easily conclude that we would be safer, less exposed to risks of having problems visited upon us by standing on one side." He said that there were seri-

ous economic risks in pressing ahead with EMU when unemployment was so high in Europe. He also said that if it looked as though the tough EMU criteria on debt, budget deficits, inflation and exchange rates were not sustainable, then it would be in the UK's interest to stay outside.

Mr George was speaking as one of the Government's inde-

pendent economic advisers warned that taxes would have to go up after the next election, or public spending be slashed, if Britain was to meet the Maastricht EMU criteria. After overshooting forecasts by about £10bn last year, public borrowing in 1997/8 will remain well above the 3 per cent of GDP set by Maastricht, said Gavyn Davies, chief economist at the

investment bank Goldman Sachs and one of the Treasury's six "wise persons".

The main UK banks yesterday denied hopes of a rapid end to difficulties in the housing market, announcing that net mortgage lending in March, at £632m, was lower than the previous month.

However, the British Bankers Association added that the

number of new approvals rose 26 per cent to 31,630 in March. Approvals are an important indicator of actual borrowing in six to eight weeks' time.

The BBA's figures came as a separate survey by TSB showed that since the new year the average cost of buying a home has dropped by 5.6 per cent, based on the cost of a typical mortgage for each £100 of take-home pay.

NatWest retreats over attempts to oust Morton

PETER RODGERS
Business Editor

NatWest appeared to be in retreat yesterday on its behind-the-scenes attempt to oust Sir Alastair Morton, co-chairman of Eurotunnel.

This followed the disclosure yesterday that Roger Byatt, deputy chief executive of NatWest Markets, had suggested to Sir Alastair several times that he should quit early to smooth the path of debt negotiations with the banks.

Sources close to the negotiations said that leaks of NatWest's position were likely to forestall any attempts by Eurotunnel's leading banks to pressure the company's board to drop Sir Alastair early. The banks have no direct power to remove a co-chairman.

Sir Alastair's contract expires in October but he made

clear earlier this year that the Eurotunnel board had asked him to stay until the negotiations had been completed. The talks with the banks are due to start later this month and may last well into the autumn.

Eurotunnel takes wind out of P&O's ferries

PATRICK TOOHER

The shipping, property and construction group P&O yesterday reported a sharp drop in traffic on its cross-Channel ferry route in the face of increased competition from Eurotunnel.

Analysts said the figures provided further evidence that consolidation among ferry operators was only a matter of time.

P&O said the number of

tourist vehicles using its Dover-to-Calais service fell by 23 per cent in the first three months of this year, and the number of ferry passengers carried dropped by 17 per cent.

"Carrying continued to fall as Eurotunnel's Le Shuttle service approached its natural share of the market," the company said.

The news came as P&O denied reports that it was planning to merge its cross-Channel operations with its rival, Stena Sealink, in a bid to meet the increasing challenge of Eurotunnel head-on.

Mr Byatt and other senior figures in NatWest including John Melbourne, a main board director, believe that Sir Alastair was the right man to push through construction of the tunnel. But the bank now wants somebody

else put in charge of renegotiating the debt.

In a statement, a NatWest spokesman denied that Mr Byatt, the corporate lending chief who is in charge of the Eurotunnel negotiations, was the

executive leading the campaign to unseat Sir Alastair.

The bank also said the matter was not discussed at last Sunday's weekly meeting of the bank steering group, which is held alternately in London and Paris.

However, it is understood that the issue of whether Sir Alastair should quit early has been discussed recently by leading banks.

Sir Alastair has told them he intends to fight for the rights of shareholders under French law, which gives less weight to bank creditors in a financial rescue.

NatWest is one of four lead banks on the steering group handling negotiations on restructuring £8.1bn of Eurotunnel debt. It is understood that two key French banks on the steering committee, Credit Lyonnais and BNP, have not been pressing for Sir Alastair to leave early.

It also emerged that a decision last week by Eurotunnel to switch brokers from SBC Warburg to Kleinwort Benson was the final move in a complete severance of the company's connections with the investment bank.

Societies pull rug from under the carpetbaggers

NIC CICUTTI

Derbyshire and Cheshire building societies yesterday joined a growing list of mutuals fighting back against "carpetbaggers" by announcing they would refuse to open new accounts from investors outside their regions.

The move is aimed at deterring speculative account-holders from disrupting the service offered by each society to existing members.

The decision by Derbyshire and Cheshire comes as the tiny National Counties, with just one branch in Epsom, Surrey, also said it was sending back cheques to hundreds of prospective account-holders.

A spokesman for Cheshire, the 13th-largest UK society, said: "Recently, we decided that we would raise the balance needed to open an account to £2,500 for anyone living outside our core Granada TV area, where most of our customers live."

"Local people were still able to open an account for £100. Unfortunately, what we have found is that when you set limits like that it tends to make people think there is something going on and they try even harder to open an account."

"The inflow simply wasn't normal. Rather than raise expectations, we have decided to stop people opening accounts with us," the spokesman added.

A Derbyshire spokesman said his society, the 17th-largest

with some 310,000 savers and 50,000 borrowers, was determined to remain mutual.

"We have introduced measures to discourage speculative account openers and allow us to focus on a quality service to our proper customers in our own region," he said.

"A general measure is that we will not open any accounts for people resident outside the society's normal operating area outside the wider Midlands."

The spokesman added that the society's seven city-centre branches would bar new openings other than its Crown account, with a £1,000 minimum, or Capital Bond, with a £15,000 minimum, to anyone other than existing customers or those connected to them.

National Counties' move to send cheques back to prospective members came after it was forced last month to close its doors to all new accounts.

The society, which has 15,000 savers and 5,000 borrowers, had been inundated by a speculative flood of money following reports that if it were taken over, members might be entitled to payments worth up to £4,500.

John Milton, general manager at National Counties, said yesterday: "We have been overwhelmed in recent months by applications for new accounts. Speculative inflows are misplaced and unwelcome."

"The general reaction to our decision has been surprisingly positive."

BT group in

STOCK MARKETS									
Index	Close	Day's change	Change (%)	1995/96 High	1995/96 Low	YTD (%)	1995/96 High	1995/96 Low	YTD (%)
FT-SE 100	3817.90	+8.70	+0.2	3857.10	3639.50	3.89	3857.10	3639.50	3.89
FTSE 250	4551.80	-2.00	-0.0	4568.80	4015.30	3.28	4568.80	4015.30	3.28
FTSE 350	1991.70	+3.20	+0.2	1945.40	1816.60	3.75	1945.40	1816.60	3.75
FT Small Cap	2230.91	+3.88	+0.2	2230.91	1954.06	2.90	2230.91	1954.06	2.90
FT All Share	1914.81	+3.22	+0.2	1924.17	1791.95	3.69	1924.17	1791.95	3.69
New York	5554.74	-6.67	-0.2	5689.74	3832.08	2.17	5689.74	3832.08	2.17
Tokyo	22041.30	-193.73	-0.9	22282.05	19734.70	0.70	22282.05	19734.70	0.70
Hong Kong	10964.53	+128.78	+1.2	11594.99	10073.39	3.35	11594.99	10073.39	3.35
Frankfurt	2505.25	-1.21	-0.0	2538.26	2253.88	1.87	2538.26	2253.88	1.87

Source: FT Information

INTEREST RATES									
Short sterling*			UK medium gilt*			US long bond			
1 Month	5.00	5.38	8.04	8.42	8.16	8.42	5.00	5.38	8.04
3 Months	5.31	5.72	6.65	7.03	6.89	7.32	5.31	5.72	6.65
6 Months	5.47	1.19	2.52	2.68	2.68	2.68	5.47	1.19	2.52
1 Year	5.47	3.25	5.37	7.08	7.10	7.10	5.47	3.25	5.37

CURRENCIES									
£/\$			£/DM			£/¥			
Yesterday	1.5005	-0.82c	1.6153	0.6654	+0.36	0.6187	Yesterday	1.5005	-0.82c
1 Month	1.5040	-0.55c	1.6155	0.6649	+0.24	0.6155	1 Month	1.5040	-0.55c
3 Months	1.5012	+0.59p	1.6155	0.6649	+0.24	0.6155	3 Months	1.5012	+0.59p
6 Months	1.5012	+0.59p	1.6155	0.6649	+0.24	0.6155	6 Months	1.5012	+0.59p
1 Year	1.5012	+0.59p	1.6155	0.6649	+0.24	0.6155	1 Year	1.5012	+0.59p

MAIN PRICE CHANGES									
Rises	Falls	Chg	Chg (%)	Rises	Falls	Chg	Chg (%)	Rises	Falls
London Int	140	7	5.3	Ladbroke	195.5	7.5	3.7	London Int	140
Arms	649	21	3.3	Caradon	230	7	3.0	Arms	649
Medeva	257	8	3.2	First Bus	169.5	4.5	2.8	Medeva	257

"It was like coming home."

When I realised that

behaviour of the school directors

breached the 1976 Euro-

that the Government would

have to amend legislation.

such as marriage, divorce,

birth certificates and passports."

missing IRA weapons.

said one ministerial source.

مكتبة المجلد



COMMENT

There is puzzlement in the City as to why James Capel should want to tie up £400m of its capital in the Grid, hedged though the position may be.

Web of intrigue surrounds sale of Grid shares

Both Hanson and James Capel were protesting their innocence loudly last night, but from this side of the fence it is hard to treat yesterday's £400m disposal of a 12.5 per cent stake in the National Grid with anything other than the utmost suspicion.

The questions start with why Hanson should be disposing of these shares at all at this price. Hanson is on record as believing that they are worth a lot more while the company's planned demerger apparently solved the problem of the Government's insistence that it must dispose of the shares within a year of the National Grid's flotation.

The buyer is James Capel, which says it has hedged the position with the Olayan group of companies, a privately owned Athens-based concern that likes to dabble in derivative transactions of this sort. It just so happens that one Niven Duncan, a consultant to Olayan, used to be a non-executive director of Eastern Electricity, Hanson's electricity arm. Coincidence?

Why yes, says Hanson's Chris Collins, who insists that his company has no remaining beneficial or economic interest in the shares whatsoever.

That's what he says, so we must believe him, but there is still puzzlement in the City as to why James Capel should want to tie up £400m of its capital in the National Grid, hedged though the position may be. Does the hedge give Olayan, with its strong Saudi connections, any kind of an interest in the National Grid? Who does James Capel plan

to sell them to? And is this a transaction that qualifies for normal market-making privileges? The situation demands further explanation, even if the answers ultimately prove entirely satisfactory.

Littlechild goes out on his own

Here's a conundrum. 1995 was the year when the electricity industry was consumed in a frenzy of takeover activity that saw shareholders rewarded royally and consumers by and large left out in the cold. You might have thought that any watchdog worth his salt would have something to say about this state of affairs and indeed Professor Stephen Littlechild, the director general of electricity supply, does.

His verdict is that 1995 was "another good year for electricity customers". Complaints fell (unless you happened to be supplied by East Midlands Electricity, which was so busy downsizing itself that it temporarily forgot it had any customers at all). Prices also fell (unless you happen to live in the North-west and get your juice from Newb, which conveniently discovered that it had "under-recovered" its costs the year before and so whacked up prices by 5 per cent).

Now Professor Littlechild is a contrary sort of regulator so perhaps we should not be too surprised at his stout defence of the electricity industry's record even as the evi-

dence suggesting something less flattering is mounting before our eyes. Moans about quality of supply – power cuts to you and me – have not decreased in aggregate at all. Against Midlands and Yorkshire they have increased considerably since privatisation and they have more than doubled against Eastern.

Professor Littlechild's other bold assertion yesterday was that the industry was "on track" and ready to meet the deadline of April 1998, when the domestic market will be thrown open to unfettered competition. Professor Littlechild may believe this but it is virtually impossible to find anyone inside the industry or government who shares his faith.

The opening up of the electricity market is likely to be so fraught with difficulties that it will make the Government's less-than-impressive attempts to liberalise the gas market look like a masterful piece of execution. It is just conceivable that the industry will have the systems in place by 1998 that will enable customers to switch off their local Rec and shop around elsewhere for supplies.

But please don't ask if the system is actually going to be tested out on anyone resembling a real customer before it goes live in front of an audience of 23 million domestic consumers.

Given the mixed reception competition is getting among gas customers in the South-west, proper trials might seem to be a prerequisite. It is unclear whether we will get

any. Regional trials are a non-starter because any Rec that is singled out as a test bed will claim competitive disadvantage. Nationwide trials look a better bet but anything resembling a decent sample will run the risk that the Recs lose customers for their coal-powered contracts in the franchise market.

When competition was introduced into the 100-kilowatt market and above – a market that consists of just 50,000 customers – the result was such a dog's dinner that the accountants Coopers and Lybrand remarked that, if repeated with the domestic market, it spelled "potential disaster". Professor Littlechild's problem is that he has to believe 1998 will happen. It was, after all, his obstinate belief that 12 independent Recs as opposed to a handful of integrated players was the best way to achieve competition that made him oppose the National Power and PowerGen takeovers.

Nobody else has to share that view. Nor are they likely to.

NatWest outgunned in the Channel

That was the coup that never was. The troops were marshalled, the ground prepared, the Sunday press briefed and ... er ... well, perhaps not yet chaps. At the last moment NatWest lost its nerve and abandoned its whispering campaign to oust Sir

Alastair Morton as co-chairman of Euro-tunnel. It is only possible to speculate on why, since, as is usually the case with failed coups, NatWest is now refusing to admit that any such plan was ever hatched.

Suffice it to say that the threat of legal action if it could be shown that NatWest had become actively involved in the management of Euro-tunnel was a potent reason for holding back. By pushing for Sir Alastair's removal, even in a roundabout sort of way, NatWest was perilously close to making itself a shadow director of Euro-tunnel, which in turn laid it open to action by angry shareholders desperate for retribution from anyone with the money to pay. In French law, and to some extent British as well, NatWest might have been liable for what many shareholders insist was an essentially false prospectus.

Presumably NatWest hoped that by removing Sir Alastair it would gain a more compliant Euro-tunnel board, one that could be bulldozed more easily into the kind of reconstruction bankers, as opposed to shareholders, want to see.

It didn't work. Sir Alastair is indeed planning to leave, but in his own good time and after negotiating a deal that ensures at least a proportion of the tunnel's future cash flow is guaranteed to its long-suffering equity investors. Bankers might like to believe they still hold all the strings, but it is nice to know that just occasionally they still get out-manoeuvred.

Cedric the Pig is indisposed but shareholders still unleash volleys of criticism during British Gas agm

Controversy over fat cats dogs Brown to the end

NIGEL COPE

Cedric Brown, the controversial British Gas chief executive, finally stepped down from the company yesterday, although criticism of his pay, generous pension and stewardship of the accident-prone group dogged him to the end.

Speaking after the company's poorly attended annual meeting in Birmingham, Mr Brown said he planned to have a few days off, take up fishing and possibly write a book.

"I'm going to enjoy life and spend some time with my family who have been very supportive."

Asked if he was proud of what he had achieved at the company that he joined 43 years ago he said: "I achieved what I set out to do. But others will have to judge."

He admitted that the "fat cat" pay row had wounded him but refused to apologise for the embarrassment the scandal had caused the company.

"Some of it did hurt. If you are a human being it is going to. There are probably very few

business people that have experienced that kind of thing. We're not trained for it. But you learn to cope with it and learn a lot about yourself."

Mr Brown, whose 75 per cent pay increase in 1994 sparked the "fat cat" controversy, declined to say whether he felt relief or sadness on his last day. "I am going to look back at the whole 43 years and put the last two years in context. There's been a lot written about it and there's nothing more I can say."

Mr Brown's retirement will be cushioned by a £240,000 annual pension and a £120,000 consultancy fee, as well as a chauffeur-driven car and staffed office. Although he has more than 700,000 share options, most are worthless due to the low level of the British Gas share price.

British Gas had been braced for a large and unruly shareholders' meeting after last year's event when nearly 5,000 investors descended on the Docklands Arena in London and a 20-stone pig gorged itself on a trough of share options. This time only 500 turned up



"You learn to cope with it and learn a lot about yourself": Cedric Brown bows out

Photograph: Newstream

and Cedric the pig couldn't make it. The sow is heavily pregnant and was deemed unfit for travel.

Shareholders complained about the early 10am start and many were late, saying they couldn't find the National Exhibition Centre. British Gas denied that it had deliberately timed the start to prevent a larger turnout and a potential repeat of last year's fiasco.

Shareholders were divided in their opinion of Cedric Brown's performance as chief executive.

Most displayed a mixture of either anger or pity. Noel Falconer, a small shareholder who failed in his bid to be elected to the board, was the most vocal. "Cedric Brown has been a disaster as a chief executive. He is a super engineer but he was promoted beyond his capabilities."

Another shareholder called for the whole board to resign: "1995 was disastrous for the reputation and image of British Gas and I believe the directors are to blame. They have made this

company a laughing stock. Why don't they all go now?" However, the chairman, Richard Giordano, said the board was committed to carrying on.

Mr Brown did have some supporters. Mr Gibson from Glasgow said: "I am genuinely sorry to see Cedric Brown go today. The man has given 40 years to this company, boy and man, and we should recognise that." Polite applause followed.

Dennis Blakemore, a former water industry worker, who had cycled 23 miles from Stratford-

upon-Avon to attend the meeting, was more critical, saying: "I'd like just a fraction of his pension. There must be people who could do a better job. I invested in this company as a kind of little bid and have been waiting for the better times to come. They never have."

The company's customer service levels were also criticised as new figures from the Gas Consumers Council showed complaints about the firm's supply and service had doubled in 1995.

IN BRIEF

• **Water groups under French control.** General Utilities and SAUR Water Services, yesterday called for their proposed £75m bid for Mid Kent Holdings to be referred to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission after the High Court refused to rule on the issue. Mid Kent, which runs water services for 540,000 people in the county, had asked the court to uphold a 1991 undertaking by General Utilities not to increase its stake in the water company above 19.5 per cent. The application followed a December announcement by General and SAUR, which together own 39 per cent of Mid Kent, that they were ready to bid 440p a share in the absence of an MMC inquiry. The court decided the only person who could bring legal proceedings on the subject was Ian Lang, President of the Board of Trade. Last night, he was said to be considering whether a referral was appropriate. Mid Kent's shares were unchanged at 433p.

• **Allied Domecq, the UK drinks group,** may buy out the majority shareholding in its French champagne associate Lanson Pere et Fils from its parent Marne et Champagne. The decision on whether to proceed was said by an industry source yesterday to depend on the outcome of a court case between the two companies. Allied is suing the French owner for breach of contract over a distribution agreement for Lanson's champagne.

• **Conrad Black, effective owner of The Telegraph newspaper group,** has agreed to acquire seven newspapers on Canada's Atlantic coast from the Thomson Corporation. The Toronto-based Thomson also said it was in discussions with a potential buyer for seven daily papers in Ontario. The price of the latest deal with Mr Black's Hollinger group was not disclosed. Last year, Mr Black bought 19 newspapers from Thomson.

• **Consumer confidence in the US** is surging as anxiety about job-cuts and corporate down-sizing shows signs of dissipating. The Conference Board's index shot up to 105.3 in April from a revised 98.4 in March. The last time that the index was higher was in May 1990. The recovery in consumer sentiment is likely to extinguish any remaining hopes on Wall Street of a cut in interest rates. And with inflationary pressures showing signs of gathering, some analysts are beginning to see a scenario for a rate increase.

• **Ian Lang, President of the Board of Trade,** yesterday launched an international campaign for global free trade. In a speech in London, Mr Lang outlined his "2020 vision", calling for removal of all remaining trade barriers by that year. It is the first time a trade minister from a leading industrialised nation has set a target for achieving fully liberalised markets. Mr Lang's speech, at a British-American Chamber of Commerce lunch, underlined his determination that the international community should not lose the momentum achieved during the Uruguay round of trade talks.

• **General Accident** has reached agreement with Union des Assurances de Paris (UAP) to buy its 99.9 per cent stake in UAP International Allgemmeine and UAP International Lebensversicherung for £61m cash.

BT group in £1.5bn Italian plan

MICHAEL HARRISON

British Telecom and its partners in the Italian telecommunications joint venture Albacom plan to invest up to £1.5bn over the next five years if they are awarded a licence to provide full telecom services in Italy.

The joint venture will bid for the licence next year in competition with a grouping led by the Italian financier Carlo de Benedetti and France Telecom. Alfred Mockett, managing di-

rector of BT Global Communications, said yesterday that Albacom would be in a prime position to take advantage of the liberalisation of the £11bn Italian market as competitors are allowed to take on the duopoly of Telecom Italia and Olivetti.

He was speaking as BT and the Italian bank BNL, joint owners of Albacom, confirmed they are to pay £71m for a 2.4 per cent stake in Silvio Berlusconi's television empire

Mediaset. In return Mediaset is paying £22m for a 30 per cent stake in Albacom.

Mr Mockett described the cross-shareholding arrangement as a marriage certificate. As a dowry, Mr Berlusconi is giving Albacom all the telecoms business of Fininvest, the parent company of Mediaset.

The deal will give BT access to Mediaset's microwave network, which consists of 1,800 sites across Italy that could be used to launch a mobile tele-

phone service. BT will also be able to take advantage of Mediaset's three network national television stations and its voice network.

A Mediaset spokesman said the Albacom joint venture would initially target big Italian industrial groups such as Fiat for their telecoms business.

BT and BNL are also likely to sell off more of their holding in Albacom, with Swan, the gas business of Eni, a possible investor.

Lang backs pensions crackdown

PETER RODGERS

Business Editor

The Government will incorporate new proposals for much greater disclosure of directors' pension entitlements into the Companies Act, Ian Lang, President of the Board of Trade, said yesterday.

This followed confirmation by the Stock Exchange that it had agreed to changes in its rulebook to enforce recommendations on pensions disclosure by

the Institute and Faculty of Actuaries.

The actuaries have come down in favour of a compromise to satisfy the objections of big companies and the CBI and the Institute of Directors to their original proposal, which was to publish the full transfer value of directors' pensions.

The employers proposed watering this down so only the amount of pension payable in retirement was disclosed in annual reports.

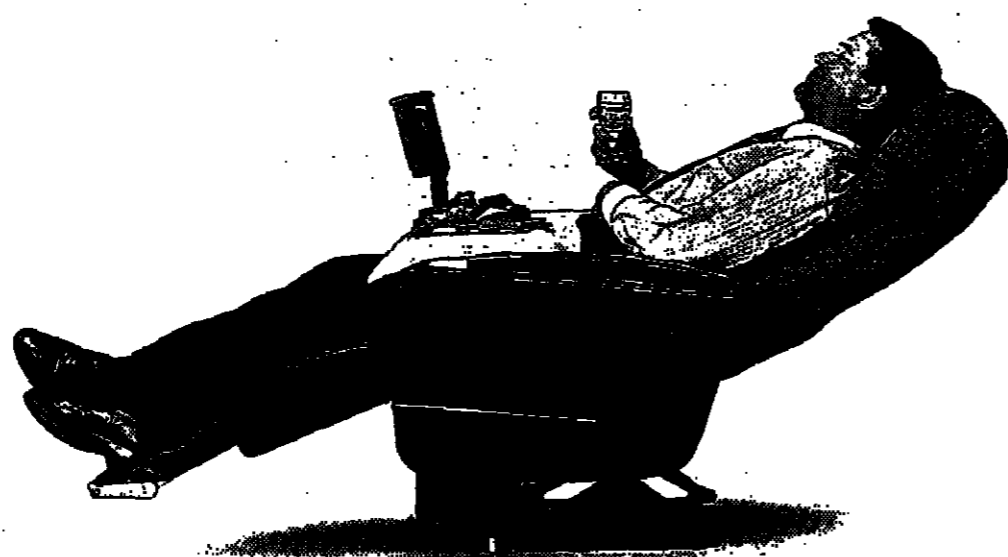
Disclosure of capital values – essentially the cost of funding these pension payments – would be around 10 times as high and would lead to severe embarrassment for some companies. In the case of senior directors who take large pay increases near retirement, this could throw up multi-million-pound figures.

After extensive consultations, the actuaries found opinion was split, with investors leaning towards disclosure of capital values and many companies following the CBI line.

The compromise to be adopted by the Stock Exchange and the DTI is to require companies to report the amount of pension payable annually in retirement, as the CBI wants. In addition, they must either give the capital value or enough further information for outsiders to make their own calculations of the capital value. The information will cover at least seven headings.

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Abtrust emerges as a new force

THE INVESTMENT COLUMN

EDITED BY TOM STEVENSON

Abtrust Emerging Economies has proved a disappointment since it floated at 100p in November 1993. With a heavy weighting towards Latin America, the investment trust was unlucky in being hit by the Mexican peso crisis just a year after launch. In September 1994, on the eve of Mexico's financial melt-down, the largest part of the fund was in that country. That did not help net assets per share, which had slumped from 101.8p to 82.9p in the year to last September.

But yesterday's half-way figures show that the trust is mounting a strong comeback. Net assets have surged 13 per cent to 93.6p in the six months to March, easily outperforming the International Finance Corporation composite index of emerging markets, which was up less than 10 per cent in sterling terms over the same period.

That performance has helped the fund overtake its peers among general emerging market funds. The average growth for the seven trusts monitored by the Association of Investment Trusts is 9 per cent over six months and 18 per cent over 12. Abtrust, by contrast, has notched up an impressive 26 per cent advance since March of 1995.

The fund's outperformance has been helped by a definite move away from Latin America, where it is under-represented compared with rivals by around 5 percentage points. Whether by accident or design, Abtrust's decision to place its bets on Asia has paid off. With 63 per cent of assets in that region in March, it has cashed in handsomely on the sharp rebound in Far Eastern stock markets.

Despite signs of a rebound in sentiment towards Latin America, Abtrust is recycling those Asian profits into Europe, the Middle East and Africa. It plans to drive up the proportion of assets in these regions to 15-20 per cent.

But, although the fundamentals are improving around the world, a more worrying aspect of the recent revival in emerging markets is the support provided by the money flowing out of the developed markets in the US and Europe into other parts of the world. If that prop is genuinely structural, seeking the superior long-term returns expected from the old Third World, then it is good news. If those funds take flight at the first hint of the next Mexican crisis, the ride for shareholders in emerging markets could be no smoother in the future than it has been in the past.

In that event, investors will be better off in a general fund like Abtrust, even though the discount to net asset value has narrowed to 2 per cent, with the shares up 0.5p at 91.5p yesterday. Add in the value of the warrants and

Abtrust is less than 1p away from the original offer value. But investors seeking safety in these turbulent markets might prefer a bigger and more liquid fund such as Templeton Emerging.

ODI needs more focus

The information era being formed as the computing, media and telecommunications worlds converge offers investors unlimited opportunities. The problem is that nobody knows what this new age will look like or how the technology will work, let alone who the winners will be.

For tiddlers like loss-making electronic publisher On Demand Information to succeed they need to focus their expertise on niche markets by selling either distribution (hardware) technology or information (software) content.

Rather confusingly, Leeds-based ODI claims to be doing both. Its big idea is to revive the concept of the paperless office by developing con-

stantly up-dated, on-line directories and brochures for Internet pages that save its corporate clients valuable storage space and retrieval time.

Examples include the world's first system simultaneously to transmit images and speech over the World Wide Web – the fastest-growing part of the Internet – and a recent, four-year distribution deal giving BT the right to sell ODI's multimedia products aimed at the personal and construction markets.

ODI is also looking to exploit opportunities to build and update encrypted company Web pages. Although Web page production is very much a cottage industry, multimedia consultants Durlacher estimate that the UK's top 40,000 companies will be linked to the Web by the year 2000, spending up to £70,000 a year maintaining information on their own site.

To tap into this potential £2.5bn market, ODI wants to hire another 60 staff on top of the 240 it already employs.

That, and the prospect of maiden profits by the end of the calendar year, ought to be a good reason to subscribe to yesterday's two-for-25 rights issue at 180p to raise £7m. It is, after all, the

first cash call since the shares were floated at 78p in December 1993 and should see ODI through the next two crucial years.

But ODI persists in being all things to all people. It has four divisions involved in everything from interactive television, CD-Roms for training programmes and healthcare videos. Until there is more evidence of focus, decline the rights.

Pet City has further to go

Pet City's first results since joining the Alternative Investment Market at the end of last year were pretty much in line with expectations at the time of the flotation.

Operating profits before store opening costs of £78,000 were up a fraction on last year's first half after a 48 per cent rise in sales to £25.9m.

After a slight slow-down in the rate of openings, the loss before tax for the six months to January was £293,000, down from £694,000. More importantly, the company said its planned expansion to 75 sites by the end of July 1997, from the 39 trading currently, was on track, despite having fallen behind original expectations.

The Pet City concept is intriguing, a chain of out-of-town pet superstores that the company boasts are "more like going to the zoo than just shopping". And the fledgling group has ambitious plans – a network of 300 stores is planned by the year 2003.

That has already been reflected in the share price, which has risen more than a third from the 300p placing price, after a sparkling debut when they jumped to a first-day premium of 55p. After another 20p rise, they closed yesterday at 415p.

On the basis of illustrative projections, the company, which is aiming for the sort of category dominance enjoyed by businesses such as B&Q and Toys R Us, could be making sales of over £200m and profits of about £2m by the year to July 1999.

Assuming a full tax charge on that profit, the resultant earnings per share of about 25p would put the shares on a prospective price/earnings ratio of about 16 three years out.

That seems a pretty steep price to pay for a company that is yet to prove that its range, price advantage and "shopping experience" is enough to tempt shoppers out of the supermarkets. Pet City's largest competitor, in the meantime the shares are high enough.

Nadir keeps his distance for Polly Peck whodunit

CITY DIARY

JOHN WILLCOCK

Asil Nadir, the former Polly Peck boss who jumped bail on theft charges totalling £34m three years ago and flew to northern Cyprus, is back to answer his critics – by phone. To mark the publication of *Who Killed Polly Peck: the corporate assassination of Asil Nadir*, a tome written by Nadir's business subordinate, Elizabeth Forsyth, he will take part in a telephone press conference on Thursday.

Hacks will be able to quiz him about the book at a press centre in London while he fields the calls in Cyprus. It should be fiery stuff – Mrs Forsyth, a 59-year-old grandmother, was jailed last week for five years after being convicted of handling £400,000 stolen by Nadir. The original publication date of 2 April had to be ditched when Forsyth's trial on charges of money-laundering went against her. She then had to set to work with a ghost writer to write a last chapter.

Yorkshire Water infuriated millions of customers yesterday by imposing a blanket county-wide hosepipe ban – and then rejecting an invitation to sponsor a prayer for rain. A combined West Yorkshire choir at St George's Hall, Bradford, is singing Mendelssohn's oratorio, *Elijah*, on Saturday, and they approached Yorkshire Water for support.

A spokesman for the



Old hat: Asil Nadir will be fielding calls from Cyprus

choirs said: "The work is basically about heavenly relief from drought and famine and contains the lines, 'The deeps afford no water and the rivers are exhausted'. 'We're going to use the occasion to pray for rain and thought it entirely appropriate to ask Yorkshire Water for some sort of support'."

A spokeswoman for Yorkshire Water replied: "We will have to rely on our own efforts to beat the drought."

Nice to know that Glaxo Wellcome's assets are protected from the vagaries of the divorce courts. Earlier this year, it emerged that one of the giant drug group's more unusual properties was

Oh to be a City spin doctor. Shandwick was handling the PR for British Gas at its AGM in Birmingham yesterday. After the meeting finished most of the Shandwick personnel hot-footed it back to the railway station. Not so Colin Trusler, chairman of Shandwick UK, and James Poole, a director of Shandwick Consultants, who were whisked back to London in a helicopter – "for a new business meeting," according to the firm.

The liveliest moment of the AGM itself came when a Glaswegian shareholder, a Mr Gibson, contrasted the success of BT with the problems of British Gas. Mr Gibson then added it was not up to him to praise an Edinburgh man – BT's chairman Sir Iain Vallance. "You should see them," he said. "They're the most miserable people you ever meet. There's more life in a Glasgow funeral."

a share in a home in the exclusive London district of Chelsea belonging to Sean Lance, the group's supreme for Europe, Africa, the Middle East and most of Asia. The latest accounts reveal Glaxo sank £75,000 in the property, but failed to mention that it related to a flat in Draycott Place, behind Sloane Square, the eponymous haunt of young unmarried ladies seeking an entrée into a higher class of drawer.

Clearly if, heaven forbid, Mr Lance was to part company with his wife, Glaxo could be exposed to the risk that the estranged spouse might seek her share of the spoils from this plainly desirable property. But the *Independent* can now reveal that such eventualities have already been anticipated.

An ante-nuptial contract between one Sean Patrick Lance and his intended, made in Pretoria, South Africa, in 1990 has come to light. Assuming there aren't two Sean Patrick Lances in the world, both hailing from South Africa, it would appear that he keeps the property and Glaxo's asset is safe. Thank goodness for lawyers.

IN BRIEF

• **Aromascan**, the digital aroma technology group, has teamed up with Mitsubishi Electric of Japan to form a five-year joint development and marketing agreement. Aromascan's proprietary sensor technology will be a key element in the development of automated industrial process control systems. Mitsubishi has revenues of more than \$36.5bn, with strong positions in advanced micro-electronics and industrial automation.

• **Shares in SkyPharma**, the new group run by ex-Medeva boss Ian Gowrie-Smith, will resume trading on the main market on Friday after nearly six weeks of suspension. Dealings on Aim were halted in March following news of the acquisition of private Swiss drugs group Jago.

• **Lucas** moved to quell speculation that Rover Group boss John Towers would be joining the group. A spokesman said: "It is purely media speculation. The recruitment process is not yet complete." Mr Towers yesterday shocked the motor industry by resigning as chief executive of Rover.

• **Cray Electronics** said yesterday it had had a satisfactory second half with profits in Cray Systems and P-E higher than in the first half. The company's cash position has also stabilised after a heavy outflow in the first half.

• **Smith & Nephew** had another strong day, with its shares up 3 per cent as the market warmed to the link-up with US group Advanced Tissue Sciences. They will produce the first "off-the-shelf" bio-engineered human skin replacement. Dermagraft is targeted at the \$2.5bn market for the treatment of diabetic foot ulcers.

• **Shell** plans to invest \$75m in India to manufacture and market petroleum products, natural gas, liquefied natural gas and petrochemicals in India. The Anglo-Dutch oil group has sought permission from the Indian government to set up a wholly-owned subsidiary in the country.

• **Canlab Pharmaceuticals** has appointed Michael Redmond, a former executive director of Fisons, as a non-executive director with immediate effect.

• **Boxmore International**, the Northern Irish packaging group, is talking to drugs giant Glaxo Wellcome about the purchase of part of its pharmaceutical printing and packaging businesses. No price was given.

• **Glaxo Wellcome** has won approval from a key sub-committee of the US Food and Drug Administration for its new analgesic drug, Ultriva, used during anaesthesia.

MAID shares soar on news of IBM link

PATRICK TOOHER

Shares in MAID leaped 26p to 240p yesterday after the on-line business information provider signed an agreement with IBM to supply data through the computer giant's Internet service.

The deal is the latest in a series of alliances that have seen MAID link up with Bill Gates' Microsoft and other leading industry players such as CompuServe, one of the largest consumer on-line information services.

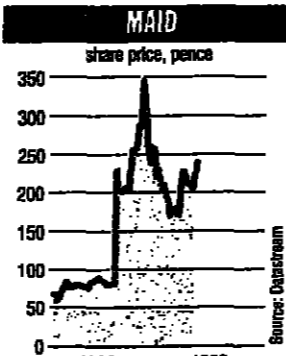
Speaking from California, where IBM is unveiling its strategy for the Internet, Dan Wagner, chief executive of MAID, said the revenue potential from the latest deal was "eye-popping" but refused to give any numbers.

"It has phenomenal implications for us because we are so tiny," he said. "We have always believed that there are many complementary distribution channels for our highly structured databases of valuable material which are more effectively reached aligned with others rather than in isolation."

He also hinted that more distribution deals are in the pipeline. IBM will distribute MAID's news and research databases through Infomarket, which is part of its new Internet-based corporate information services to be marketed world-wide through IBM's extensive network. "It immediately places IBM as a major business information supplier," said Tom McClain, general manager of IBM's electronic content services division.

In return, MAID will receive what Mr Wagner calls "the lion's share" from the sale of data.

MAID – short for Market Analysis and Information Data –



base – supplies packaged, on-line services such as market research reports, brokers' analysis and company statistics to business professionals for a fee.

The shares have had a roller-coaster ride since being placed on the stock market two years ago at 110p. Investors balked at the idea of paying the original flotation price of 150p, which would have valued a company making profits of £600,000 at more than £120m.

Winning favour in the City continued to prove elusive and the shares slumped to just 45p in June 1994.

News of a joint venture with Microsoft to provide information services for Windows 95 sent the shares sky-rocketing to a high of 354p, making them the best performers in the FT-SE All Share index last year.

Last November MAID raised \$38.4m in a US listing on the Nasdaq market, where technology stocks enjoy a strong following and a higher rating among investors.

Mr Wagner remains unhappy with the reception he received in the UK. "We have something of tremendous value which is recognised in the US, but I'm not sure that is so in the UK, where we are still seen as a bit of an upstart."

GRE takes over RAC insurance arm

NIC CECUTTI

Guardian Royal Exchange, the UK insurer, yesterday sealed a £70m deal to take over RAC Insurance Brokers, the roadside assistance organisation's insurance arm.

The deal allows GRE to use the RAC's name to market its financial service products to the club's six million members and to the public. The arrangement will last for 10 years and is renewable. In return, the RAC will market its own products to GRE customers.

The takeover, the first of its kind, marks a fresh twist in the telephone insurance war which, despite its rapid expansion in the past few years, has been

dominated by a handful of companies including Direct Line and Churchill.

GRE expects that the RAC broking arm's 325,000 customers will mostly or wholly switch their policies to Guardian Direct, the company's telephone insurance arm. By buying customers in this way, GRE is bypassing the need to build up a base by means of its own underwriting and marketing skills alone.

The RAC's broking arm will continue to trade under its RAC brand name, but will benefit from Guardian Direct's underwriting and customer service systems. In turn, the sale relieves the RAC of its own broking arm at a time when several national

al insurance brokers, including Swinton and AA Insurance, have faced difficulties in competing with direct insurers.

Last year, the AA's motor insurance arm admitted losing millions of pounds for the first time in the wake of the continuing premium war and mass desertions by its customers. Swinton has been forced to close branches and set up its own telephone broking service to compete with the opposition.

Neil Johnson, chief executive officer at the RAC, said: "Guardian Royal Exchange has demonstrable strengths in brand development and marketing. I am delighted that its philosophy is in tune with our own thoughts of how to devel-

op the brand to enhance services to RAC members. This new alliance will bring real benefits to both organisations and their customers."

John Robins, group chief executive at GRE, said: "This agreement adds an extremely powerful brand to our marketing. GRE will strengthen considerably its position in the direct writing market in the UK."

The deal, which was helped by Phoenix Securities, involves a £50m payment by GRE to the RAC. In addition, GRE takes on £4.7m of RAC Insurance Services' debt. A further £18m will be paid by GRE depending on the number of policies renewed by RAC policyholders through GRE.

Colonial float offers share bonanza

Colonial Mutual, the large Australian insurer, yesterday announced plans to float the company before the end of the year, entitling its 350,000 policyholders in the UK to free shares worth an average of £1,500 each, writes Nic Cicutti.

The company's plan to seek a stock market listing follows an agreement with the Australian government in the wake of its \$577m (£290m) purchase of State Bank in 1993.

David Adam, chairman of Colonial, said the decision to float had also been conditioned by the company's long-term plans to diversify and obtain ready access to capital.

He told members at yesterday's annual meeting: "The

mutual structure was originally developed to allow people with similar needs to join and satisfy those needs together."

"But with changing attitudes to savings and retirement security, the whole of the product range of participants in the industry has to change and broaden. It has not been possible, even if it had been desirable, for any company to limit itself to what its original business was as a mutual and still remain viable."

Mr Adam said policyholders would be able to cast their votes at an extraordinary general meeting planned for November. If the vote is in favour, the issuing of shares in the company would take place shortly after.

Colonial Mutual, founded in 1873, is Australia's sixth-largest insurer with some A\$34bn under management. It reported earnings of A\$726m in 1995.

The company yesterday refused to give any indication of its likely value at flotation. However, some Australian analysts yesterday valued the company at A\$1.5-3bn.

If any shares distribution were based on equal amounts for all, each of its 750,000 eligible policyholders could receive shares worth £1,500. In practice, payouts are likely to be based on their length of time as policyholders, together with the type and amount of any investment.

In the UK since 1886, Colo-

nia Mutual runs a 500-strong direct salesforce plus 50 appointed representatives from its headquarters in Chatham, Kent. Total premium income in 1995 was £222m, while its UK funds under management reached £3bn. The company recently launched a telephone-based mortgage service in this country.

The insurer has 500,000 policyholders in the UK, of whom two-thirds will be eligible for benefits. The remainder will not be counted as members because they have the wrong type of policy.

A company spokesman said before demutualisation took place approval had to be sought in Colonial's jurisdictions.

informative:

The following First Direct interest rates apply from 1 May 1996.

First Direct Cheque Account		
Overdraft Rate	Interest Rate %pa	%EAR
Agreed overdraft for balances up to £250	13.2%	14.0%
Agreed overdraft for balances over £250	16.2%	17.4%
Unauthorised borrowing (no change)	22.2%	24.6%

First Direct Premier Cheque Account		
Overdraft Rate	Interest Rate %pa	%EAR
Agreed overdraft up to £10,000	9.0%	9.3%
Unauthorised borrowing (no change)	22.2%	24.6%

First Direct is a division of Midland Bank plc. Member HSBC Group.

STROUD & SWINDON

MORTGAGE COMPANY LIMITED

NOTICE OF MORTGAGE INTEREST RATE CHANGE

The Company's variable rate of mortgage interest will decrease by 0.25% from 1st May 1996.

This notice is applicable to borrowers of the Stroud & Swindon Mortgage Company Limited whose mortgage payments are updated annually. The effect of this and any other changes this year will be included in the Annual Update of payments in January 1997.

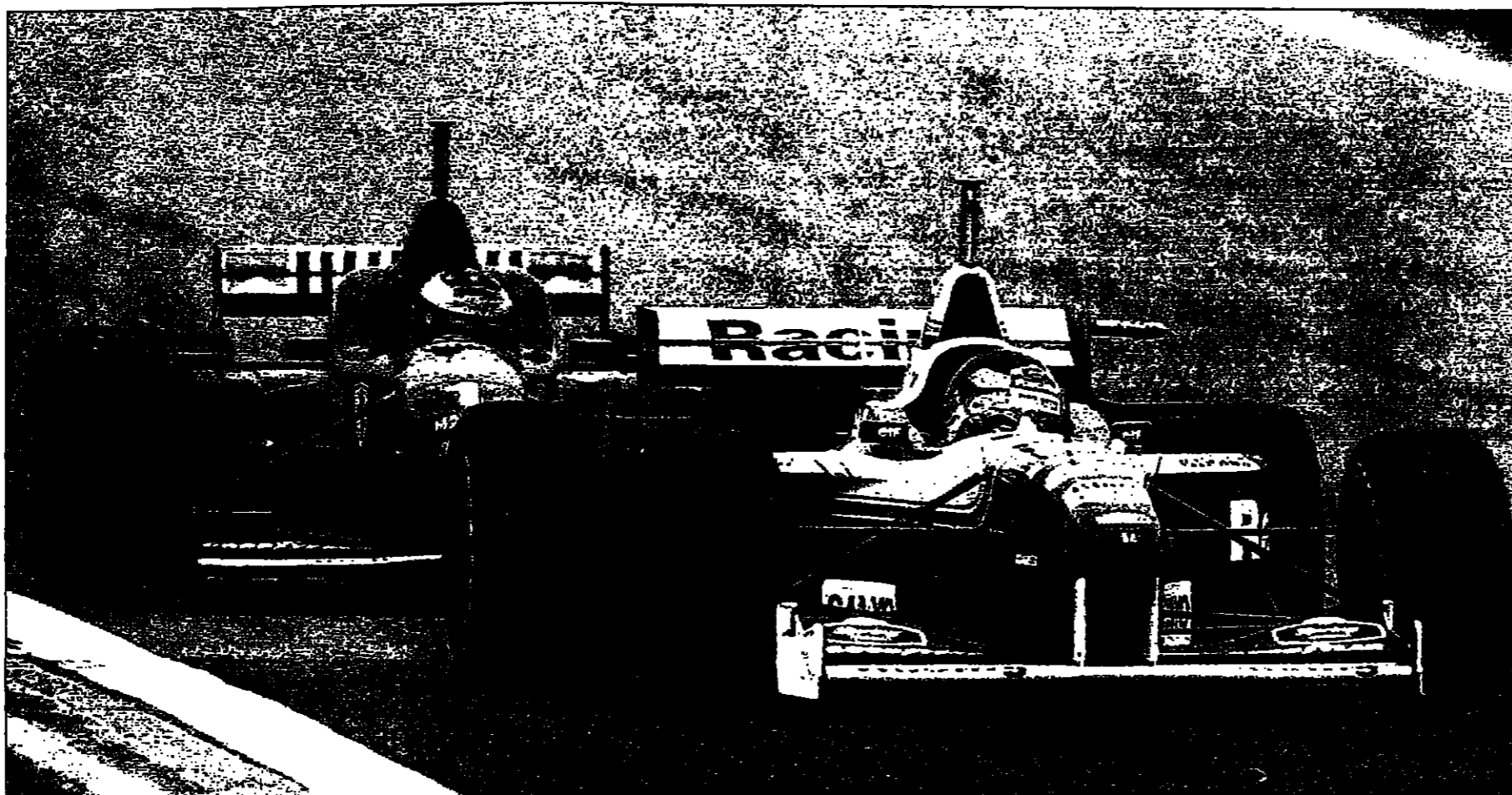
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مكتبة الجليل



THE INDEPENDENT

PLAY FORMULA 1 DREAM TEAM



Michael Schumacher on Jacques Villeneuve's tail at the Nurburgring on Sunday

Photograph: Mike Hewitt/Allsport

The latest scores and results

Jacques Villeneuve won the European Grand Prix in magnificent style, holding off Michael Schumacher despite a recalcitrant gearbox to take his first grand prix victory in fine style. But Dream Team rewards drivers for their performance over the entire grand prix weekend, so when the scores were totted up, Villeneuve's total of 26 (including five points for Driver of the Day) was eclipsed by his team-mate's score.

Damon Hill did not drive a good race on Sunday, as he would be the first to admit. He fluffed the start, made a 20-second precautionary pit-stop for an imaginary puncture, and then clobbered the mobile chicanes known as Pedro Diniz. Yet he set fastest lap in his pursuit of David Coulthard, and that, together with his utterly dominant performance in qualifying and the warm-up gave him a total score of

29, taking his dream team total to an awesome 114. It may be early days yet, but it is hard to see a Dream Team without Hill on board topping the table at the end of the season.

The aforementioned Coulthard had endured a miserable season before the Nurburgring, but pulled out all the stops to impress the Mercedes big-wigs on their home territory. He made a rocket-like start, and later in the race held off the much faster Hill to secure an important podium position.

The much-hyped Heinz-Harald Frentzen, tipped by insiders for a Williams drive next season, once again performed poorly in his native land. He may be quick, but he has got to find the knack of finishing races. His team-mate Johnny Herbert, outshone by Schumacher at Benetton last year, is starting to match Frentzen's per-

DRIVER OF THE DAY: Jacques Villeneuve

As Michael Schumacher sliced great chunks off Jacques Villeneuve's lead in the closing stages of the Grand Prix of Europe, the German's fans assumed that it was only a matter of time before their man took first place from the 'upstart' Canadian. Schumacher, as Jean Alesi found last year, does not like to be denied at the Nurburgring.



But Villeneuve is no pushover. His back-

ground is in Indycars, where the racing is always tight and defending a narrow lead is a way of life, and the young Canadian used every trick in the book to keep the Williams ahead of the looming scarlet Ferrari for a first grand prix win at only his fourth attempt. So what if he's geeky, wears specs and insists on a race suit two sizes too big? He's a racer, and a deserving driver of the day.

performances, and the German's credibility may suffer.

Pedro Diniz drove in his usual slow, blinkered manner but once again got his Ligier to the finish, albeit having bounced off Damon Hill en route. He continues to rack

up the Dream Team points, and remains a good cheap pick. Other strong performers in the bargain basement were Diniz's fellow Brazilian Ricardo Rosset, and Minardi's £2m-rated Giancarlo Fisichella. Right at the back of af-

fairs were the Forti drivers, who were unable to lug their ungainly devices to within 107% of Damon Hill's pole position time and packed up on Saturday night - a process to which they may well become accustomed.

Grand Prix Shopping List

POINTS SCORED

DRIVERS	POINTS	DRIVERS	POINTS
1 M Schumacher	19	43	
2 J Alesi	0	47	
3 D Hill	29	114	
4 G Berger	4	33	
5 D Coulthard	17	22	
6 E Irvine	4	31	
7 J Villeneuve	26	81	
8 M Hakkinen	-1	27	
9 H H Frentzen	-1	7	
10 M Brundle	16	17	
11 R Barrichello	12	34	
12 J Herbert	5	13	
13 M Salo	0	33	
14 P Lamy	12	20	
15 P Diniz	7	30	
16 U Katayama	0	9	
17 J Verstappen	-1	9	
18 O Panis	-3	25	
19 I Badoer	0	2	
20 R Rosset	0	12	
21 A Montemini	0	8	
22 G Fisichella	5	5	
23 V Sospiri	0	0	
24 T Marques	0	-5	
25 F Lagorce	0	0	
26 H Noda	0	0	
27 T Inoue	0	0	
28 M Blundell	0	0	
29 J-C Boullion	0	0	
30 K Brack	0	0	
31 K Burt	0	0	
32 E Collard	0	0	
33 N Fontana	0	0	
34 D Franchitti	0	0	
35 N Larini	0	0	
36 J Magnussen	0	0	
37 A Prost	0	0	
38 G Tarquini	0	0	
39 K Wendlinger	0	0	

CHASSIS

£20m	40 Benetton	6	46
£18m	41 Williams	20	79
£15m	42 Ferrari	12	55
£14m	43 McLaren	14	44
£13m	44 Sauber	11	11
£12m	45 Jordan	13	22
£10m	46 Ligier	-3	18
£8m	47 Tyrrell	0	22
£5m	48 Arrows	-2	0
£3m	49 Minardi	0	-6
£1m	50 Forti	0	-7

ENGINES

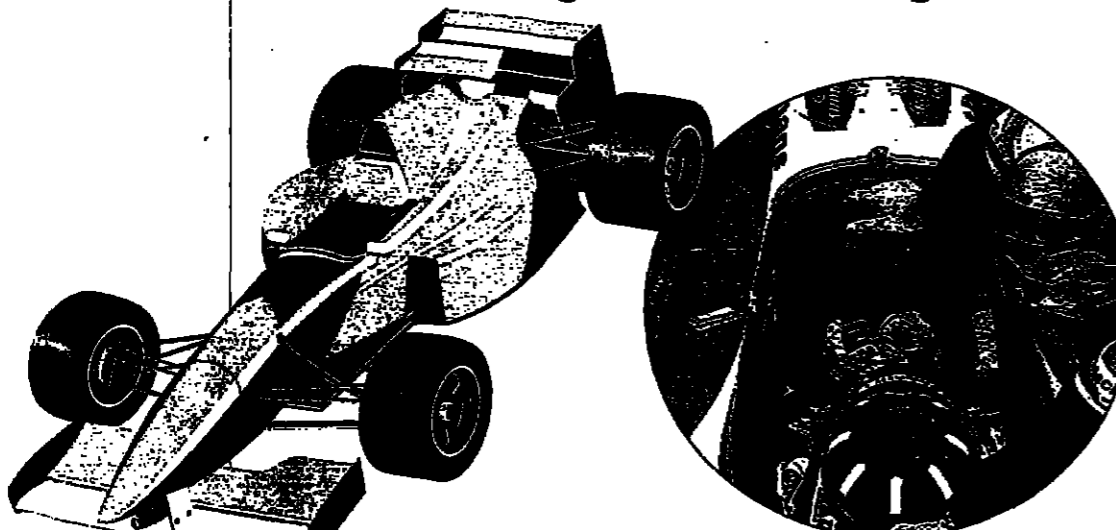
£26m	51 Renault	-20	80
£18m	52 Ferrari	16	62
£15m	53 Mercedes	14	54
£12m	54 Peugeot	13	29
£10m	55 Mugen	11	46
£8m	56 Ford V10	12	29
£6m	57 Yamaha	0	26
£4m	58 Hart	0	13
£3m	59 Ford Zetec V8	0	0
£2m	60 Ford ED V8	0	11

WIN a drive in a Grand Prix car

The Dream Team manager with the highest number of points at the end of the Grand Prix Championship season will win our top prize - a drive in a 650bhp F1 car.

You will be flown to the AGS team's training school

in the south of France for the most exhilarating experience of your life. The school specialises in F1 courses and provides all the racewear and instruction you will need for a day driving F1 and other single seat cars.



Top 50 Dream Teams

Nineteen teams are in joint 1st position with 192 points and thirty-one teams are in joint 20th position with 167 points.

- 1 Fru-Fru People 6
- 1 Schuey's Shadow
- 1 Fox's Flyers
- 1 Team Mac
- 1 Spore Heity
- 1 Curtis Cruisers
- 1 Ocean
- 1 The Aky Spondies
- 1 F Juan
- 1 Ice
- 1 F1 Olly
- 1 ADS Grand Prix Racing
- 1 Doole's Dealings
- 1 Le-Sport
- 1 Points Make Prizes Racing

- 1 Settles Follies
- 1 Damon's Demons
- 1 Tucker's Try Hard
- 1 Amazing F1 Engineering Limited
- 20 Mark 1
- 20 Bighill Racing
- 20 The Spoilers
- 20 Karvey Team Racing
- 20 BJ Werbangers Racing Team
- 20 Goody Gumdrops
- 20 The Williton Afterburners
- 20 Herbert Grand Prix Team 1
- 20 Louie's Fan Club
- 20 Chapman's Chargers
- 20 Tyrrell's Tyrants
- 20 Prolapse Racing
- 20 Morgan's Team
- 20 Come On Dad
- 20 PJW Racing

- 20 Allegro Racers
- 20 Eagles
- 20 Nick's Nitros
- 20 Mark's Merry Men
- 20 Visa F1
- 20 The Tarmac Eaters
- 20 Slipstream
- 20 Hill's Angels
- 20 Peter's Perfect First
- 20 Formula Feel Good
- 20 Hipala Racing Team
- 20 Blue Healers
- 20 Driving Force Racing
- 20 Riley's Radicals
- 20 Apricorn Fun House
- 20 No More Excuses Grand Prix



JOIN OVER 23,000 READERS WHO ARE PLAYING FORMULA 1 DREAM TEAM
See Thursday's and Friday's paper on how to register for the San Marino Grand Prix on 5 May

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sport

Henman is the key to home revival

John Roberts meets Britain's No 1 tennis player who is reaping the benefits of a healthy rivalry

They seem odd comrades. Greg Rusedski and Tim Henman. Born on the same date, a year and an ocean apart, the new Brit and the true Brit have given the Davis Cup team a pulse 12 months after the deathly retreat from Bratislava.

A first-round tie against Slovenia in the Euro/African Zone Group Two on an indoor court in Newcastle at the weekend is unlikely to distract the Toon Army from ruminating over the destiny of the Premiership, but in national tennis terms it represents progress.

This time last year, Henman's promotion to singles coincided with the lowest point in the team's history, a 5-0 whitewash on the slow clay of the Slovak Republic leading to the brink of Group Three; effectively the Fourth Division of a competition inaugurated in 1900 as a socialistic tussle between the United States and Britain.

Three events conspired in Britain's favour: the high-profile David Lloyd took over as the team captain, the highly ambitious Rusedski forsok Canada for his mother country (to be precise, the country where his mother was born), and when it came to a relegation play-off in July, Monaco were out of place on the Eastbourne lawns as the Brits usually are on everyone else's patch of clay.

Three more victories and we'll be on the road to... well, to Euro/African Zone Group One.

But the Davis Cup is only part of it. By welcoming Rusedski with an open mind and in a spirit of rivalry, rather than the rancour of one or two of his British colleagues, Henman did himself a huge favour.

The 21-year-old national champion from Oxford has used Rusedski as a stalking horse, and on Monday, he nosed four places in front of him in the world rankings, advancing to

No 54. Before we know it, Britain could have two men in the top 50. Last time the Lawn Tennis Association was able to scan the ranking list with eyes so high was in July, 1978, when Buster Mottram was the No 17 and John Lloyd No 27.

"I think if you look back at when Jeremy [Bates] was at the peak of his career, he never really had anyone else in this country really pushing him forward, somebody to compete against," Henman said. "But for me it was almost perfect timing for Greg to arrive."

"I can understand how other people maybe didn't really take to it so keenly, but I never had any problem with it, and he's been a very important benchmark for me, somebody to look up to and try and emulate in a lot of areas. He's been sort of a target of mine. It's inevitable that I am going to have weeks where I don't play as well as I'd like to. If at the same time Greg can have a good week, it's a good week for me."

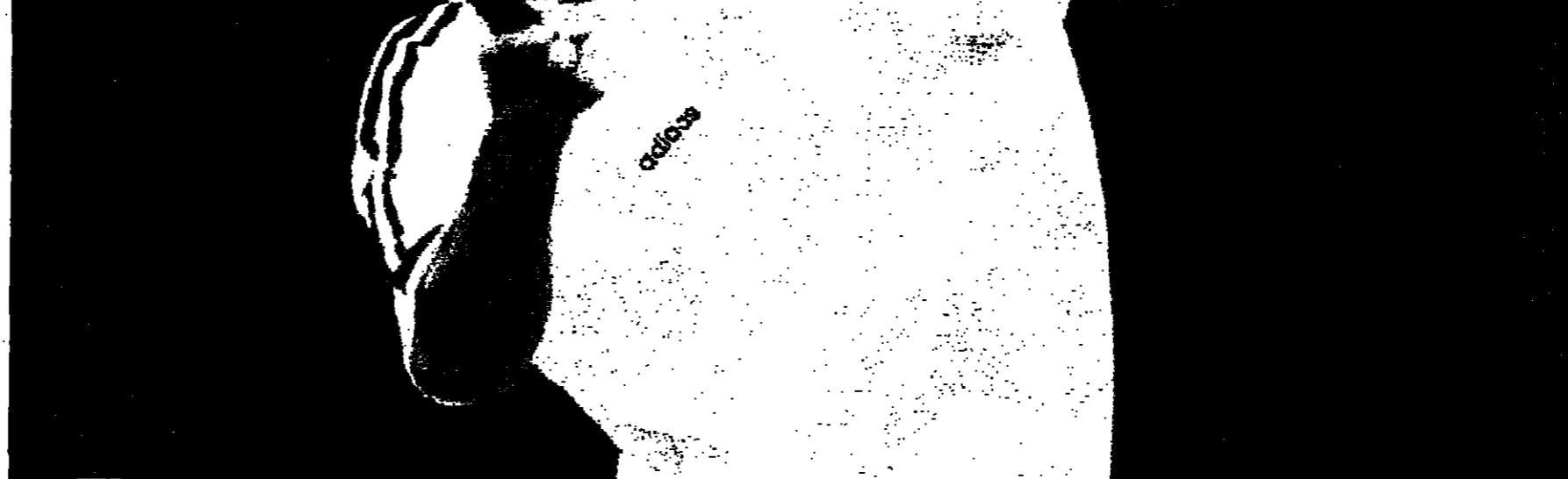
'Greg's been a very important benchmark to me, somebody to look up to'

there's still going to be something positive for British tennis.

"Greg's arrival on the scene has made a big difference, and most of the guys in the top 15 in this country have improved their ranking. So there's definitely a buzz about things, and it does look healthier than it has for quite a few years."

That much is encouraging for David Felgate, the former tour professional who travels as Henman's coach and also has wider responsibilities as the manager of the men's national training department for the Lawn Tennis Association. Rumblings, however, threaten to destabilise the situation. The question has been raised whether it is practicable for Felgate to devote so much time to one player while running a department.

Henman is confident Felgate will remain by his side. "David's a hell of a lot more than just a coach," he



Henman: 'People do start putting labels on your head about being the next British hope, but I've never had a problem with that'

Photograph: Chris Cole/Empics

emphasised. "He's a great friend who I can talk to and discuss virtually everything about my career. He's been the most important person in my career, so long may it continue."

Obviously if you look at it bluntly, he does have two pretty major jobs, and I think a lot of people have questioned whether he can do both. From my point of view I am very happy with the way things are, and I've been anxious not to change something that for me is working very well."

The significance of coaches is largely in the minds of players. Some of the leading competitors, Boris Becker for example, seem to change their coach as often as they change their shirts. "It's more a question, I think, of horses for courses," Henman said. "Some of the top guys do seem to switch coaches quite regularly and it doesn't seem to matter so much to them. The reason they do that I don't know, but that's not the way I'd work."

Much has been made of Henman's middle-class background, which would only be an impediment if he lacked the hunger to succeed. His tennis heritage is silver spoon,

which is infinitely preferable to a wooden one. The dynasty can be traced to the turn of the century, to Henman's great-grandmother, Ellen Stawell-Brown, credited with being the first woman to serve overarm at Wimbledon. Apparently her technique was a high toss and a spin of the body before hitting the ball.

Ellen married a Berkshire doctor, and one of their three children, Susan, is reckoned to be the last woman to serve underarm at Wimbledon. "As the story goes," Henman recalled, "my great-grandmother told my grandmother an overarm serve was a bit strenuous and told her to stick to serving underarm."

Susan's husband, Henry Billington, was a Wiltshire farmer who played for the Davis Cup team and made 15 appearances at Wimbledon, giving Donald Budge a decent game in the second round in 1938, when the American was en route to the first Grand Slam.

Three Billington children played at junior Wimbledon. One of them, Jane, is Tim's mother. She has represented Berkshire and Oxford-

shire and is a member of the All England Club. Tim's father, Tony, a solicitor, has played tennis, hockey, squash and cricket for Oxfordshire and football for Headington United (now Oxford United).

Tim, the youngest of three brothers, tends to take the family history for granted, except when visitors are shown the sepia photographs. "From their attire it doesn't look like they're ready to play tennis, that's for sure."

It will come as no surprise that the player Henman admires most is the exemplary Stefan Edberg, and it so happens that the personable youngster has a couple of things in common with the Swede. Aside from owing much to the coaching of an Englishman (Tony Pickard in Edberg's case), both have been in trouble for whacking balls in frustration.

Ten years ago Edberg was fined \$350 (£232) during a tournament in Los Angeles. He had intended to strike the ball harmlessly into the net, but it zoomed between a couple of line judges. Edberg's confession to the seamy side of his past has become something of a party piece ("I'm still

paying off the fine," is the punchline). Henman's experience was chastening. It will be difficult to live down his action at Wimbledon last summer, when he became the first player in the Open era to be disqualified by the All England Club after accidentally hitting a ball-girl in the head.

While it would be wrong to suggest umpires have come to suspect Henman of being trigger-happy, he was penalised a point during last month's Lipton Championships in Florida after twice hitting a ball in anger. "Obviously I was very concerned at Wimbledon about the whole thing, because it was so unexpected and to be defaulted was a great shock to me," he said.

"But it's not something I'm rethinking on doing again. With regard to Lipton, I think that was probably the first time I've ever had a warning barring Wimbledon, so it's not something I'm concerned about, because I know I don't have a problem with that. If other people do try and make a meal of it, that's up to them."

Although he caught the odd

glimpse of Fred Perry wandering about Wimbledon, Henman never got to meet the greatest English player, who died in February 1995. Rather than be inhibited by Perry's record, however, he views it as an inspiration.

"When I've been growing up, coming through in junior tennis, it's almost been used as a negative against me," he said. "It's always been reported that we haven't had a Wimbledon champion since Fred Perry, emphasising how poor the standard of British tennis has been. But I think it's something I've tried to use as a positive to spur me on to try and achieve whatever I can in the game."

"People do start putting labels on your head about being the next British hope, as it were, but I've never had a problem with dealing with that. I've always remembered, with the help of people around me, that I've just got to concentrate on what I do best. If I keep working and do the things that I've done, then I'm sure that I will continue to have good results."

WATCH FOUR DAYS TURN INTO CENTURIES.

No 2 TOTAL No 1
187 606 100
WICKETS 3
LAST PLAYER 169
7 BOWLERS 10
96 OVERS FLD. GT H
LAST WKT. FELL 395
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 S

The Britannic Assurance County Championship - where cricketing history is made. Remember Lara's 501 against Durham? Or Johnson's 10 wickets in one innings against Derbyshire? Where the stars of tomorrow make their name today and where the drama of the game has a full four days to unfold. It's English cricket at its purest and it starts on 2nd May. Don't just read about it. Watch it happen.



Benson and Hedges Cup

Derbyshire v Lancashire
 Derbyshire won toss
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CRICKET SCOREBOARD

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COUNTY PUST CODE

acceptance and surgery.
 "It was like coming home,"
 she said. "When I realised that

Court of Justice found that the
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 breached the 1976 Euro-

the case, said it was "highly likely"
 that the Government would
 have to amend legislation.

such as marriage, adoption,
 birth certificates and passports.

day over the issue of whether
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said one ministerial source.

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I am giving the award to Mason, who came from nowhere to end up as the most solid-looking full-back in the Five Nations, almost like a full-back from an earlier era. The others all share the runner-up award, which I hope sends them away happy after what has not been the happiest of seasons for rugby in the British Isles.

His opposite number, Bruce Rioch, admitted: "Fowler has hurt Arsenal a lot - maybe this time we ought to tackle him in the tunnel before we go out there!"

The England captain, David Platt, was preparing for some hard work in Arsenal's midfield. "There is no way that Liverpool are just going to get away with this. We need them. We need them. Some people might think they will have one eye on the FA Cup final and will take their foot off the pedal in the last couple of League matches, but I don't believe that."

Their professional pride won't allow it and we know we'll have to earn the points. But it is very important to us to get into the UEFA Cup because playing in Europe has been tradition at Arsenal for a number of years now. Heads were down after we went out of the Coca-Cola Cup in the semi-final at Aston Villa a couple of months ago, but we've picked things up again quite well and are still in the driving seat for the last UEFA Cup place."

Only Tottenham, two points behind, can overhaul Arsenal if the Gunners win tonight, and the north London neighbours finish the season with tough away trips to Leeds tomorrow and Newcastle on Sunday, while Arsenal meet the old club of their manager, Bruce Rioch, relegated Bolton, at Highbury on the final day.

Top scorer Ian Wright, though, is doubtful for tonight's match having pulled a groin muscle after scoring at Blackburn on Saturday.



England's Third Division clubs yesterday pledged their support to the Rugby Football Union in the negotiations with First and Second Division clubs that resume in London today over how the professional game will be run and financed.

Both in Leicester, where the game was first played, and in London, where it has since become the most popular, the 24 clubs in the Third Division, which are the only ones to have no professional players, have agreed to support the Union's proposals. The clubs are: Bedford, Bath, Bournemouth, Bradford, Brighton, Bristol, Cardiff, Chester, Colchester, Coventry, Exeter, Gloucester, Harlequins, Huddersfield, Ipswich, Kingston, Leeds, Leicester, Lincoln, London, Luton, Newcastle, Northampton, Oxford, Peterborough, Plymouth, Reading, Sale, Southampton, Swansea, Telford, Torquay, Wakefield, Worcester, York and York City.

The clubs are also expected to support the Union's proposals for a new system of player transfers, which would allow clubs to buy and sell players for a fixed period of years, and to limit the number of players a club can have on its books.

The Union's proposals are expected to be agreed by the clubs in the next few days, and will then be put to a vote of the players. The players are expected to support the Union's proposals, but they will be asked to agree to a new system of player transfers, which would allow clubs to buy and sell players for a fixed period of years, and to limit the number of players a club can have on its books.

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Modahl, who has made herself available for Britain's European Cup team in Madrid, said: "I'm excited to be competing again."

is, after all, the fastest track. You average 230mph. It was my first sight of it, 18 decades of banking and it was amazing."

"But my confidence came back and I got to 218mph without really pushing. I walked away, my head held high, knowing I was still a racing driver."

"What made it difficult was that I'd never broken a bone in my life and I'd had five weeks to think about it. I couldn't get it out of my mind and come to terms with it. I was lucky to walk away from the accident let alone talk about it. But at least we found out it was a component failure that left me with no brakes."

The US 500 is being held in direct competition with the traditional "300," at Indianapolis, following a row between organising bodies. It means the top drivers will be at Michigan, leaving a field of second-raters at the Brickyard.

The income from these two syndicates was not enough to cover the continued building of the fleet of yachts, in what was a job creation project at the moribund shipyard of the Ciotat, between Marseille and Toulon. Work will continue on the first four boats, but not the remaining three hulls which have been moulded.

While Whitebread, which has rejected a merger, did not want to comment, there was clear relief at the fact that headquarters near Southampton. It will also mean less competition for attention from the amateur round the world voyage, the ET Challenge, which also starts in September.

SPORT



THE RAPID RISE OF TIM HENMAN

John Roberts on Britain's new tennis hope

Keegan in danger of cracking under the strain

Alex Ferguson was not saying much yesterday, but the Manchester United manager did not need to. The title race may still be running hot, judging by Kevin Keegan's televised outburst on Monday night, the psychological battle has already begun.

The victor is Ferguson, a master of the art after five years of championship run-ins. Keegan, fresh to the pressures and wearing his desire on his sleeve, appears close to cracking under the strain.

It was not just what he said on Monday night after Newcastle's 1-0 win at Leeds, it was the way he said it. His eyes were bright with emotion, his finger jabbed at the camera and his passion was raw and unchecked. The Newcastle manager appeared to accuse Ferguson of provoking Leeds' bold performance on Monday by comments he made after Leeds lost at Manchester United the previous week. He then appeared to link Ferguson with rumours that Nottingham Forest were

prepared to let Newcastle win their vital Premiership clash tomorrow in return for being the opposition for Stuart Pearce's testimonial next week. The rumours were vehemently dismissed by Frank Clark, the Nottingham Forest manager. Ferguson did accuse Leeds players of "cheating" their manager after their efforts at Old Trafford. His remarks were widely interpreted as an attempt to ensure Leeds were as committed against Newcastle as they were against Manchester United.

Glenn Moore on the winners and losers in the Premiership's psychological war

But he has not made any public comment about Newcastle's match with Nottingham Forest, or made representations behind the scenes. That accusation has, privately, angered Ferguson, but his overall mood on hearing Keegan must have been one of quiet satisfaction.

While Ferguson is equally passionate about the game, and prone to outbursts, there is

often a calculated air about them - which is not to say his sentiments are not genuine, just that he knows how, and when, to express them. Keegan is still learning this game. A few weeks ago he won widespread admiration for the magnanimous way he took the last-minute defeat at Liverpool, and the equanimity he showed in similar circumstances at

Blackburn. But, in recent weeks, the great communicator has gone to ground, talking at length only to a tabloid newspaper, which pays him handsomely. His anxiety and his distress at the prospect of losing a championship Newcastle had in their hands at Christmas, cannot help but communicate itself to the players.

After Manchester City, a club facing pressures of a different kind, won at Aston Villa on Saturday, Alan Ball stressed how important it was for the

manager to seem in control. "The top man has to be strong," he said. "You have to handle these situations. The players are looking to you. If you have an Achilles heel, if there is the slightest hint of desperation, they will pick up on it." There is more than the slightest hint of it about Keegan. His reliance on motivation rather than tactics, coupled with his present mood - his parting shot on Monday was, "I tell you, I'll love it if we beat them, love it" - brings fear that his next pre-

match talk will be more Ally MacLeod than Bill Shankly. Before then, he has a decision to make which will require a cool head. David Ginola is available tomorrow. Keegan has said he will play, but does he drop Faustino Asprilla, his expensive misfit, or Keith Gillaspie, Monday's matchwinner? A similar choice faced another manager on Sunday. He dropped the big signing and reaped the harvest. But, somehow, you suspect Keegan will not be calling Old Trafford for advice.

One-match ban and fine for Asprilla

MARK BURTON

Newcastle United brought up the big guns to defend Faustino Asprilla before a Football Association disciplinary commission in a Leeds hotel yesterday but in the event they need hardly have bothered.

The Colombian striker was found guilty on two misconduct charges that followed his tangles with Manchester City's Keith Curle during a Premiership match at Maine Road in February, but he escaped with a one-match ban, at the start of next season, and a fine of £10,000.

Newcastle's concern about the possible consequences for their record £7.5m signing from Parma of a case that had been delayed by nine weeks was clear in the size of their delegation to the hearing. It was seven strong, including Asprilla, his inter-

preter and Newcastle's manager, Kevin Keegan. The club's solicitor, Stephen Horroby, questioned the commission's right to view video evidence of two incidents over which the referee, Martin Boylan, had been criticised. Brighton are to stay at the Goldstone Ground for a further 12 months after agreeing a lease-back deal for an undisclosed fee with Chartwell Land, the ground's new owners. The club, now relegated to the Third Division, want to build a £32m stadium at Tad's Hole Valley, about two miles from the Goldstone.

denham, took no action. In the first, Asprilla appeared to elbow Curle as the defender pulled him back, and in the other, at the end of the game, the Colombian appeared to butt the Manchester City captain, with a linesman standing close by.

The three-man commission, headed by the Lincoln chairman John Reames, took legal advice - their senior lawyer Raj Parker outlined the FA case - before rejecting the challenge, and a video of the elbowing incident was then shown three times. After the four-hour hearing, the FA spokesman Steve Double announced that Asprilla had been found guilty of both elbowing and butting Curle, who was cleared of his charge of behaving in an "aggressive manner" after a subsequent 45-minute hearing. "On the first charge [the elbowing], the commission ruled that Mr Asprilla would pay part of the cost of the hearing, serve a one-match ban from the start of next season and be fined £10,000," Double said. "On the second charge, it was decided that no penalty would be imposed."

Although the ban is short, the fine is the highest imposed by the FA for an on-field incident and matches the one levied on Eric Cantona for his attack on a fan at Selfhurst Park last year. Neither Asprilla nor Keegan commented on the verdict. Double said Newcastle's club secretary, Russell Cushing, indicated the St James' Park board would seek legal advice before deciding on an appeal. Asprilla could have come off worse. Arsenal's Paul Davis was given a nine-match ban for breaking the jaw of the Southampton midfielder, Glenn Cockerill, off the ball in the late 1980s. A six-match ban would not have been surprising. Police raid ticket outlets, page 6

Anderton has reaction

Darren Anderton may miss another chance to show the England coach Terry Venables he is still a realistic contender for a Euro 96 place. The Tottenham manager, Gerry Francis, is "reluctantly" considering leaving him out of tomorrow's Premiership game at Leeds United after the midfielder reported stiffness and soreness following his first full game for nearly eight months.

Anderton has had two groin operations this season and, until Saturday's 1-1 draw with Chelsea, had managed only four first-team starts.

He is still hoping to be called into Venables' European Championship party and wants to be part of the two-match trip to China and Hong Kong on 19 May - just 10 days before Venables must name his final squad of 21. "It is asking a lot of him to play Saturday, Thursday, Sunday after being out for so long," Francis said. "He did well to last the full 90 minutes against Chelsea but it's obvious he's still not yet the Darren Anderton of last season. You couldn't expect it. If he doesn't play on Thursday he could play at Newcastle on Sunday - or vice versa."

B&H CUP: Kent dominant, Derbyshire resurgent and Surrey batsman rampant



Alistair Brown, of Surrey, hits out during his innings of 82 yesterday Photograph: Peter Jay

Hooper's art bewitches Middlesex

HENRY BLOFIELD

reports from Canterbury
Middlesex 219-6
Kent 220-4
(Kent win by six wickets)

There are few better sights than watching Carl Hooper score runs. He is the most felicitous of stroke-makers and his 62, which helped take Kent to a convincing victory over Middlesex, provided a lovely warm glow towards the end of a distinctly chilling day.

So far this year, Middlesex have been out of sorts and having lost all three of their qualifying matches they are also already out of the last eight in the Benson and Hedges Cup.

In the field, they seem strangely naked without the distinguished presence of John Emburey and the increasingly avuncular looking Mike Gatting. It is at the moment a general of an army which lacks cohesion.

Kent, on the other hand, have now won all three of their group matches and, even without captain, Mark Benson, and seam bowlers, Alan Igglesden and Dean Headley who have an assortment of injuries, are in good working order and no one more so than Hooper and opening bowler Julian Thompson who won the gold award.

Rather surprisingly, on a greenish pitch, Gatting chose to

bat and at once Middlesex had problems against Thompson as he moved the ball away from the right-hander off the seam and bowled a good line. Last year Thompson dismissed Brian Lara for a "pair" when the West Indies played Kent and now he took three for 11 in his first six overs.

The Middlesex innings was belatedly consolidated by a typically determined if ungainly innings from John Carr and Keith Brown. They were then taken passed 200 by some wonderfully fluent stroke play from 17-year-old Owais Shah who was born on Karachi. He on-drove Martin McCague for a six with an ease Hooper would have envied. Shah is a young man with an unusual talent.

Matthew Fleming started Kent's innings with three thunderous fours and then Trevor Ward, who grew in confidence, Hooper and Graham Cowdrey took them close to victory. Hooper's off-drive for six off David Foltett was the stroke of the day and the product of glorious timing for he hardly appeared to hit the ball.

Hooper and Ward put on 85 in 19 overs before Ward drove Foltett to backward point. Cowdrey now helped Hooper add 62 in 14 overs before got out in quick succession. Mark Ealham who drove Phillip Tufnell for a huge six, saw Kent home with 16 balls to spare.

Scoreboard, page 26

Cork turns tables on Lancashire

MIKE CAREY

reports from Chesterfield
Derbyshire 137
Lancashire 70-6

Not for the first time in recent seasons, Dominic Cork pulled the rug from beneath Lancashire's feet just when they probably felt they had matters firmly under control yesterday.

In 11 deliveries of hostile, late outswinger, Cork took four wickets for nine runs and suddenly Derbyshire's total of 137, the product of decidedly undistinguished batting, seemed defendable. Lancashire need 68 with four wickets remaining, today's weather permitting.

Lancashire left out their overseas player, Steve Elworthy, who had been expensive in recent matches. Even more unusual, given the ground's reputation for helping seam bowlers first thing, was Dean Jones's decision to bat.

The ball unsurprisingly zoomed around, often at varying heights. Once Kim Barnett and Tim Tweats had got them-

selves out to Ian Austin, the innings became a remarkable chapter of mishaps. The chief beneficiary was Mike Watkinson, who, despite not always getting his line right, somehow emerged with 5 for 44, his best figures in this competition.

When Lancashire's reply was launched with a flurry of half-volleys and other dross, batting seemed to be more straightforward. But Cork begged to differ and prised out Jason Gallian and Gary Yates in his second over.

Another perfectly pitched outswinger had John Crawley picked up at slip. Then Cork enjoyed his one slice of luck when Mike Atherton, admittedly going across his stumps, was adjudged leg before. It was a marginal decision which left Lancashire on 41 for 4.

It became 48 for 5 when Graham Lloyd left a lot of daylight between himself and a Devon Malcolm Yorker. After a lengthy stoppage for rain, Derbyshire could hardly have fancied re-summing with a wet ball. But Watkinson carved Cork's first delivery to slip to maintain the pattern of mediocre batsmanship.

Brown goes to town

DAVID LLEWELLYN

reports from The Oval
Gloucestershire 307-4
Surrey 308-7
(Surrey win by three wickets)

Dark mutterings at Surrey's decision to charge £10 to watch Benson and Hedges Cup cricket at The Oval, compared with the more modest £6 charged north of the Thames at Lord's, were muted after another value-for-money performance by Alec Stewart and his mercurial men.

A second successive victory for Surrey, studded with some superlative batting from both sides, brightened a generally overcast day. Alistair Brown's devastating 17-ball blitz, which took him from 31 to 81, almost - but not quite - overshadowed a marvellous hundred from Gloucestershire's Rob Cudlipp in only his second appearance in the competition. Cudlipp's unbeaten 137,

which took Gloucestershire to their highest total in the Cup, was all the more admirable since the 22-year-old had come in at an inauspicious moment for Gloucestershire - first wicket down in the third over. The gold award was probably poor consolation for Cudlipp.

He played with the composure of a veteran. In tandem with opener Tony Wright he helped put on 161 for the second wicket to make a match of it. He was there until the end. More than three hours of fine strokeplay and an outrageous shot or two, notably the second of his two sixes over the long-off boundary, when he removed his bottom hand as he struck the ball.

But Brown, following up his half-century at the weekend, naturally out-hit everyone. His 57-ball innings contained a variety of blows, with one thing in common - distance. One of his four huge sixes finished up in the road close to the gasome-

ters and another would have reached Vauxhall Station had a stand not been in the way. He moved from 31 (which took him 31 balls) to 81 in 17 deliveries and brought to mind the exploits of Sri Lanka's Minda Jayasuriya.

Brown did much to lay the foundations for victory and enhanced his reputation as a possible England's Test squad. He is regarded as a "pinch-hitter", although there is nothing pinched about the way he plays. He is generous, extravagant even, a true crowd pleaser with his stunning strokeplay.

When he went, run out with a century there for the taking, the cudgels were taken up by Adam Hollis (45) and Darren Bicknell (46). Ghosts of collapses past returned to haunt them briefly - three wickets falling with victory in sight - but thankfully the new regime has instilled some backbone in the team and they eased in with something to spare.

O'Sullivan back on his best behaviour

SNOOKER

GUY HODGSON
reports from Sheffield

You would think that being branded "the bad boy of snooker" was bad enough, but Barry Hearn was inflicting more damage to Ronnie O'Sullivan. "He's a bit like Alex Higgins," he said, which would probably be actionable if he was not the manager of the sport's new infant terrible and paid for the solitaires.

It was the morning after O'Sullivan, 20, had been handed a record fine of £20,000 and given a two-year suspension, suspended for two years, for assaulting a press officer at The

Crucible, and Hearn was determined to herald the turning of a new leaf. Work was being done on the world No 3's image. "I told him," Hearn said, "this is a problem, let's get rid of it. You have a two-year sentence over your head. Try to keep your nose clean."

He's a fiery lad at times, but that is one of the reasons he plays the way he does. Alex Higgins would not have been world champion if he had conformed. But I hope Ronnie tempers his temper; he is the most exciting player for several years."

O'Sullivan, meanwhile, was preparing for one of the most difficult appearances of his career. Just 10 hours after he had publicly apologised at mid-

night for his "out-of-character behaviour", he was due to face the second favourite, John Higgins. This would be a difficult enough proposition at the best of times, but after fearing he might be thrown out of the tournament it was a huge task.

"What a day this is for him," the master of ceremonies, Alan Hughes, said introducing O'Sullivan, who, given the 24 hours he had just experienced, would probably have preferred a quiet spell in front of the television. Out he came, his head slightly bowed, to a reception that hit the right note. Not the misguided "rebel" roar that used to greet "the Hurricane" after his latest spat with the authorities, but muted, if warm, applause.

With that, an eerie normality descended on the table. Both players had been mulling over whether they would have to play a match, but neither seemed affected. Indeed, the quality of the snooker in the first session was exemplary; barely an unforced error, just a cold, clinical dispatch of the balls.

Higgins, as pale as Steve Davis and likely to pick up the mantle passed on by the great man once Stephen Hendry is finished with it, took the first frame with crisp breaks of 42 and 35. O'Sullivan struck back with a clearance of 32, and with further breaks of 32 and 51 established a 3-1 lead. His play suggested that he had been honing his potting since the

second round instead of his legal argument.

Higgins is the coming force in the sport and by the end of the first session he had a 5-3 lead. This included a total clearance of 137 that was so smooth a Rolls-Royce would have had more chance of breaking down.

Which is not what you could say about Hendry, who was 3-1 down at the interval of his session with Darren Morgan and playing like he had feared he would be ejected from the tournament. Eight frames without any spark from the world champion has the rarity of cue-ball-sized diamonds, however, and at the end he was 5-3 ahead. Breaks of 55, 82, 92 and 63 were included in the fusillade.

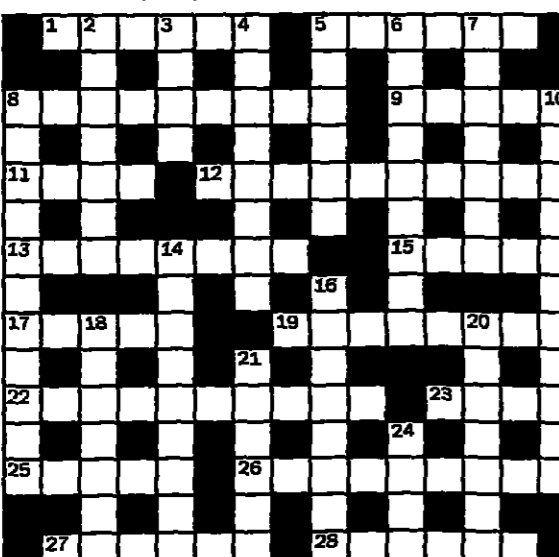
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- DOWN**
- Top parts of a prison, possibly? (7)
 - Cast out to give voice (4)
 - Plan to leave America out of brochure (8)
 - Managed detectives' rank (6)
 - Tiller with course set around the meridian at one time? (9)
 - Quarters in opening of old royal house? (7)
 - Tobacco addict - reckon his Ma is upset? (5-6)
 - Vacat (4-7)
 - Advertise big way, say, that is good to take off (9)
 - Salad in merry monarch's rule? (8)
 - Traveller has a go, very excited (7)
 - Using bad language, I have to follow a FSV (7)
 - British champion right to take a stiff drink? (6)
 - Shepherd killed in lake south of Lincoln (4)

- ACROSS**
- Dead to the world, like retired PM (6)
 - Turkey on a plate, cooked with peas, makes a meal (6)
 - Tropic island with grain on it (9)
 - In Redcar a boy parades a horse (4)
 - Primitive insect girl paints with abandon (10)
 - Pest is in the shade! (8)
 - Shoe-wiper in front of church for the wedding (5)
 - Male, accomplished driver (5)
 - Cloudburst in county trip (8)
 - Group-member and principal lodger? (10)
 - Kitty finds amusement by day (4)
 - Balanced by adjusting girth (5)
 - Star-player bowled, taken in by speed (9)
 - Beam in through supplication (6)
 - Total contained in soft notecase? (6)

Tuesday's Solution

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30

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